

FATHERS' PARTICIPATION
IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
IN NEW ZEALAND

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This thesis is dedicated to

My beloved husband

for his endless love, support, understanding and inspiration.

The material presented in this thesis is the original work of the candidate except as acknowledged in the text, and has not been previously submitted, either in part or in whole, for a degree at this or any other University.

The research reported in this thesis has been approved by University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

~Parisa Soleimani Tadi

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~ Parisa S. Tadi

Abstract

Fathers' participation in Early Childhood Education (ECE) has been recognised to have a positive influence on young children's and their families' well-being. New Zealand's education policy has promoted parental participation, and has called for supporting programmes of parental partnership by education service providers, including the ECE centres. Given the value of fathers' participation in ECE, investigations into how this participation perceived by teachers and fathers themselves is important to identify any potential gaps between the views of ECE teachers and fathers. This thesis investigated fathers' participation in ECE programmes in New Zealand. The perceptions of ECE teachers and fathers in ECE centres were probed in two separate studies in the thesis. Teachers and fathers were asked to complete questionnaires that recorded their perceptions on fathers' participation and asked for their views on the potential factors that might either facilitate or hinder such participation. The Father Participation Questionnaire (FPQ) was developed specifically for this study, but was based on questionnaires reported in the research literature which have also considered parental participation in education. The reliability and validity of the FPQ were examined as part of the research and two forms of the questionnaire were produced. These were equivalent in terms of the questions asked and factors assessed, but were suitably modified to be relevant to ECE teachers and the fathers of ECE children. This allowed similarities and differences in perceptions across the two groups to be considered.

In addition to determining the views of teachers and fathers, the research also examined the effectiveness of a father-focused intervention programme, which was developed primarily to enhance fathers' participation in ECE centres. The programme focused on fathers reading with their child at the ECE centre and, therefore, also targeted

emergent literacy skills. This provided an opportunity to observe the level and type of interactions between fathers, children and teachers within an educational focused activity.

In the first study, 100 ECE teachers completed the teacher version of the FPQ, allowing the research to investigate these teachers' perceptions related to the participation of fathers in ECE. The results demonstrated that while teachers acknowledge the fundamental role of fathers in their children's educational development, many of the responses seem to suggest that more was needed to encourage fathers to take active roles in ECE centres.

The second study explored the perceptions of 50 fathers whose children were enrolled in New Zealand ECE centres by utilizing the father version of the FPQ. Similar to the responses of ECE teachers, fathers acknowledged their fundamental role in their children's educational development and care. However, clear differences emerged between teachers' and fathers' perceptions of the facilitators and barriers to fathers' participation in ECE centres.

The third study examined the influence of the father-focused intervention programme. Twelve fathers volunteered to work on emergent literacy skills with their own children in the centres. Fathers' interactions within the ECE centres, as well as their reading behaviour and their children's print knowledge, were tested before and after the intervention programme and contrasted across those who took part in the intervention and those who did not. The findings suggested that such a father-focused programme in ECE centres may improve fathers' overall participation in ECE centres and contribute to enhanced literacy practices both by fathers and children.

The data obtained argue for the continued need to develop awareness and resources, as well as good practice, in order to enhance fathers' roles in their children's educational

development in ECE centres. The results are discussed within a parental partnership models and the practical implications of the findings are highlighted.

Presentations arising from this thesis

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	iii
Presentations arising from this thesis.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Figures.....	xiii
List of Tables.....	xiii
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	16
1.1 Background of the Thesis.....	16
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	17
1.3 Significance of the Study.....	20
1.4 Research Questions.....	21
1.5 Structure of the Thesis.....	22
Chapter 2 Literature Review.....	25
2.1 Introduction.....	25
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	27
2.2.1 Parent Participation Theories.....	29
2.3 Context of the Study.....	31

2.3.1 The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Curriculum in New Zealand	33
2.3.2 Different Types of Early Childhood Education Services in New Zealand	35
2.3.3 New Zealand Framework in Relation to Parent-Teacher Relationships ...	39
2.3.4 Quality and ECE	41
2.4 Research Involving Early Childhood Teacher	43
2.5 Father Participation Framework	47
2.5.1 The Role of Father Historically	47
2.5.2 Fathers in Early Childhood Education	53
2.5.3 Fatherhood Models	55
2.5.4 Teacher's Role in Participating Fathers	57
2.6 Research Involving Fathers	66
2.6.1 Father Participation in Educational Practices	66
2.6.2 Father Intervention Studies	71
2.7 Summary	75
Chapter 3 Study 1: Fathers' Participation in Early Childhood Education Centres: Teachers' Perceptions	77
3.1 Introduction	77

3.2 Method	79
3.2.1 Study Design.....	79
3.2.2 Participants	80
3.2.3 Procedure	82
3.2.4 Measure	83
3.2.5 Pilot Study	89
3.2.6 Modification	99
3.3 Results	102
3.3.1 Descriptive Statistics and Comparisons across Factors.....	102
3.3.2 Independent Sample t-test	111
3.3.3 The Embedded Items	113
3.4 Discussion	114
3.5 Conclusion.....	119
Chapter 4 Study 2: Fathers' Participation in Early Childhood Education Centres: Fathers' Perceptions	120
4.1 Introduction	120
4.2 Method	121

4.2.1 Study Design.....	121
4.2.2 Participants	122
4.2.3 Procedure	123
4.2.4 Measures	124
4.3 Results	124
4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics and Comparisons across Factors.....	125
4.3.2 Independent Sample t-test	132
4.3.3 The Embedded Questions	135
4.4 Discussion	136
4.5 Conclusion.....	140
Chapter 5 Study 3: The Effectiveness of Father-Focused Programme on Fathers’ Participation in Early Childhood Education Centres	
5.1 Introduction	141
5.2 Method	143
5.2.1 Study Design.....	143
5.2.2 Participants	144
5.2.3 Assessment Procedure	146

5.2.4 Measures	148
5.2.5 Intervention.....	150
5.3 Results	152
5.3.1 Centre Observations	152
5.3.2 Father-Child Shared Reading Behaviours	156
5.3.3 Children Assessments.....	159
5.4 Discussion	160
5.4.1 Centre Observation	161
5.4.2 Father-Child Shared Reading Behaviours	163
5.4.3 Children’s Print Knowledge	164
5.5 Conclusion.....	165
Chapter 6 General Discussion.....	167
6.1 Introduction	167
6.2 Summaries of the Studies	168
6.2.1 Study 1- Teachers’ Perceptions of Fathers’ Participation in ECE Centres	168
6.2.2 Study 2- Fathers’ Perceptions of their Participation in ECE Centres.....	170

6.2.3 Study 3- The Effectiveness of a Father-Focused Programme on Fathers’ Participation in ECE Centres	172
6.3 Interpretation of the Findings	172
6.3.1. Teachers’ Biases	173
6.3.2 Teachers’ vs. Fathers’ Perceptions of Facilitators	180
6.3.3 Teachers vs. Fathers Perceptions of Barriers.....	189
6.3.4 Developing Father-Focused Programmes	191
6.4 Practical Implications	198
6.5 Limitations and Directions for Future Research	200
References.....	203
Appendix 1	221
Appendix 2.....	223
Appendix 3.....	225
Appendix 4.....	228
Appendix 5.....	230
Appendix 6.....	231
Appendix 7.....	241
Appendix 8.....	251
Appendix 9.....	252
Appendix 10.....	254

List of Figures

Figure 5. 1 Frequency of Seen Male in Experimental and Comparison Groups	155
Figure 5. 2 Frequency of Contacts Initiated by Males in Experimental Group's Observations	156

List of Tables

Table 3. 1 Demographic Information of the Participants	82
Table 3. 2 Items for Teachers' Attitudes (TA)	93
Table 3. 3 Items for Teachers' Biases (TB).....	94
Table 3. 4 Items for Family Factor (FF)	95
Table 3. 5 Items for Paternal Centred Professionalism (PCP).....	96
Table 3. 6 Items for Paternal Competence (PC)	97
Table 3. 7 Items for Facilitating Conditions (FC).....	98
Table 3. 8 Example of the Six Embedded Questions.....	99
Table 3. 9 Mean scores, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alpha and Scale-Score for the Five Final Factors.....	100
Table 3. 10 Correlation between Scale-Scores of Six Preliminary Factors	101
Table 3. 11 Correlation between Scale-Scores of the Five Final Factors	101
Table 3. 12 Descriptive Statistics of Factors' Scale Scores.....	102
Table 3. 13 Results for the Teachers' Attitudes with Mean and Standard Deviations	103
Table 3. 14 Results for the Teachers' Biases with Mean and Standard Deviation.....	104

Table 3. 15 Results for the Parental Centred Professionalism with Mean and Standard Deviation.....	106
Table 3. 16 Results for Paternal Competence with Mean and Standard Deviations	108
Table 3. 17 Results for Facilitating Conditions with Mean and Standard Deviations.....	110
Table 3. 18 Results of an Independent Sample t-test.....	112
Table 3. 19 Results of Cross-tabulation Analysis	113
Table 3. 20 Results of Cross-tabulation Analysis	113
Table 4. 1 Demographic Information of the Participants	123
Table 4. 2 Descriptive Statistics of Factors' Scale Scores.....	125
Table 4. 3 Results for Fathers' Attitudes with Mean and Standard Deviations.....	126
Table 4. 4 Results for Fathers' Biases with Mean and Standard Deviation	127
Table 4. 5 Results for the Paternal Centred Professionalism with Mean and Standard Deviation.....	129
Table 4. 6 Results for Paternal Competence with Mean and Standard Deviations	130
Table 4. 7 Results for Facilitating Conditions with Mean and Standard Deviations.....	132
Table 4. 8 Results of an Independent Sample t-test.....	134
Table 4. 9 Results of One-Way Analysis of Age in FPQ Factors.....	135
Table 4. 10 Results of Cross-tabulation Analysis	136
Table 4. 11 Results of Cross-tabulation Analysis	136
Table 5. 1 Males' Presence at Pre-observation on Experimental Group	144
Table 5. 2 Males' Presence at Pre-observation on Comparison Group	145
Table 5. 3 Characteristics of Participant Group.....	146
Table 5. 4 Daddy Book Club Intervention Modules Overview	151
Table 5. 5 Description of Session Composition.....	152

Table 5. 6 Comparison between Males' Presence at Pre-observation on Experimental and Comparison groups	153
Table 5. 7 Comparison between Experimental and Comparison Groups in Centres' Observations (Pre and Post Observations).....	154
Table 5. 8 Comparison between Participant Groups	156
Table 5. 9 Comparison between Reading Behaviours at Pre-assessment on Experimental and Comparison Groups	157
Table 5. 10 Comparison between Experimental and Comparison Groups in Reading Behaviours (Pre and Post Assessments)	158
Table 5. 11 Experimental Group Reading Behaviour.....	159
Table 5. 12 Comparison between Children's PWPA at Pre-assessment on Experimental and Comparison Groups	159
Table 5. 13 Comparison between Experimental and Comparison Groups in Children's PWPA (Pre and Post Assessments)	160

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Thesis

There are multiple reasons for the establishment of partnerships between schools or early childhood centres, family, and community. Such partnerships can reinforce school programmes and environment. They can also provide an opportunity for offering family services and support, improving parents' skills and leadership (J. Epstein, 2011; Hornby, 2011). Moreover, such partnerships may connect families, school stakeholders and other people in the wider community assisting instructors with their work (Duncan, Bowden, & Smith, 2005; J. Epstein et al., 2002; J. M. White, Brotherson, Galovan, Holmes, & Kampmann, 2011). Yet, the establishment of these partnerships is mainly aimed at helping children to accomplish their goals in school and in their life (Duncan & Te One, 2014; Stonehouse, 2012; Ward, 2013). If parents, teachers and other people (e.g., communities) give importance to one another as partners in children's education and care, a caring and child-oriented community can be established (Duncan & Te One, 2012, 2014).

There has been a nation-wide focus on Early Childhood Education (ECE) in recent years due to the changes in societal conditions of parents in New Zealand (Callister & Birks, 2006; Callister & Fursman, 2013). Many children are growing up in dual-earner families (with both parents working) and need to use ECE services. The population of New Zealand's young children attending ECE programmes is increasing with a rate of 96.2% of children going to ECE centres from birth to five years of age when they are required to start

compulsory schooling (Ministry of Education, 2015). Therefore, the number of hours that young children usually spend with ECE teachers rather than their parents is increasing.

There are two models for improving interactions between parents and ECE service providers. Based on the external model of overlapping spheres of influence (J. Epstein, 1987, 2011; J. Epstein et al., 2002), three main contexts in which children learn and grow, namely, the family, the education environment (school), and the community can be combined or pushed apart. According to this model, some practices are performed separately by families, education providers and communities, with some practices conducted jointly to reinforce children's learning and development. The other model (N. B. Epstein, Bishop, & Levin, 1978) is the internal model of the interaction of the three spheres of influence which can show where and the way in which complex and essential interpersonal relations and patterns of influence are created among people at home, at school, and in the community. Such social partnerships may be implemented and examined at the level of institution (e.g., when a head teacher/ECE manager at an ECE centre invites all parents to a meeting or sends the same communications to all families) and at an individual level (e.g., when a family and an ECE teacher meet in a conference or converse on the phone). Connections between teachers, families, community groups, entities, and services can also be incorporated and examined within this model (J. Epstein, 2011; J. Epstein et al., 2002; N. B. Epstein et al., 1978).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Given the importance of parents and ECE teachers in the educational development of young children, it is considered crucial to find ways to keep parents involved in their children's daily educational programmes. Parental involvement and its positive impacts on children's academic successes have been supported by a large body of published research

(Brown & Iyengar, 2008; Carol & Sandra, 2012). Additionally, parental involvement in children's early years' education and their partnership with ECE centres have been proved crucial to contribute to children's educational attainment (J. Fagan & Stevenson, 2002; Green, 2003).

In the past, fathers' participation in ECE programmes used to receive attention in research studies which considered both mothers and fathers (e.g., Campos, 2008; Downer, Campos, McWayne, & Gartner, 2008; Holmes & Huston, 2010). Given the traditional role of fathers, who used to be seen as the sole source of income for the household, ECE research seems to have focused more on mothers in parental studies. However, the societal changes in people's lives in the 21st century have focused research on recognition of the (positive) influences of male involvement in their young children's lives and education. Recent studies have proved the important roles of fathers in their children's development including better school performance, increased self-esteem and social behavioural development (Ihmeideh, 2014; Peterson, 2014). Such partnership has been shown to be reciprocal with fathers benefitting from their involvement in their children's education, too by enhancing their personal growth and experiences (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Green, 2003; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000; McBride, Rane, & Bae, 2001).

Fathers' participation in ECE programmes can also be viewed as an important issue from another perspective. Since there is typically an unequal gender balance in ECE staffing with a very high rate of female staff, ECE centres can be considered as a relatively female dominated environment (Campbell-Barr, 2017; Farquhar, 2012; Farquhar, Cablk, Buckingham, Butler, & Ballantyne, 2006). Thus, young children have to spend a big share of their time in an environment (ECE centres) that provides limited encounters with male figures. Therefore, fathers' participation in ECE programmes can provide opportunities for

young children to interact with male role models in their educational setting (Ancell, Bruns, & Chitiyo, 2016; Farquhar et al., 2006).

Although, recent research on paternal engagement in ECE centres has contributed to increased awareness of fathers' participation (Lewis & Lamb, 2004; J. M. White et al., 2011), further research is necessary to provide insights and understanding of the factors that influence fathers' participation, and determine how to facilitate fathers' participation in ECE centres/programmes. To this end, this thesis reports on the perceptions of a group of ECE teachers and fathers in New Zealand on fathers' participation in ECE programmes. This thesis investigates the facilitators and barriers of such a partnership, and also examines the effects of an initiative (focusing on literacy acquisition as an example of a father-focused programme) on strengthening such partnerships.

Although there is an increased awareness of the critical role of fathers in children's educational development, the development of support programmes designed specifically for fathers (father-focused programmes) has received less attention in ECE centres (McBride et al., 2001; Turbiville & Marquis, 2001; J. M. White et al., 2011). Such programmes have the potential to enhance fathers' participation in ECE. In addition, such programmes may prepare fathers to have more active roles in their children's education (Green, 2003; McBride et al., 2001; Palm & Fagan, 2008; Potter, Walker, & Keen, 2012; Schwartz, 2004). Despite recent efforts to engage fathers, many fathers seem to hesitate to get involved in their children's ECE and usually lag behind mothers in this respect (Green & Cooper, 2008; McBride et al., 2001).

1.3 Significance of the Study

It is considered important to examine partnership models and investigate the role of fathers in young children's educational and physical development, since research to date has mostly neglected fathers' roles in young children's education and development. To this end, the first question is to identify the perceptions and perspectives of ECE teachers on fathers' participation in ECE programmes. It is also clearly important to examine the levels of fathers' participation in ECE programmes and verify whether ECE programmes need modifications to encourage fathers' participation.

There are many models of partnership, involving strategies to improve parental participation in ECE, and intervention plans to enhance parental participation. Traditionally, parental research studies mainly focused on mothers since female figures were usually in charge of child care. This is still reflected in the staffing of ECE centres with mainly female teachers on site. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate insights into how fathers' roles have been taken into account in partnership models.

To this end, investigating ECE teachers' perceptions with regards to fathers' participation in ECE centre's environment can shed light on this issue. Similarly, it is important to verify whether fathers perceive their participation in ECE similarly or differently to that of teachers. Such a mutual understating between ECE teachers and fathers could improve partnership models and enhance fathers' participation in ECE programmes. Similarly, recognition of barriers and facilitators of fathers' participation in their children's ECE and care may not only improve partnership models but also could improve the education and the well-being of young children.

Once the key factors in partnership models have been recognized, it will be important to find suitable strategies to enhance and maintain the required changes to facilitate fathers' participation in ECE programmes. Therefore, this thesis has set out to firstly investigate ECE teachers' and fathers' perceptions on fathers' participation in ECE programmes, and then has examined the significance of a strategic intervention programme (a father-focused programme on an emergent literacy programme) for fathers' participation in ECE centres. Since it is important to examine whether fathers' presence may support improvement in children's educational attainment, as reported in the published research literature, educational attainment of the children were planned to be tested, too. In other words, the intervention programme on emergent literacy adopted from that developed by Scott, Van Bysterveldt, and McNeill (2016) targeted mainly fathers and also pre- and post-tested the children between two to five year old (in their print and word knowledge).

The areas under investigation in the current thesis were formulated in the form of research questions as follow:

1.4 Research Questions

The present study set out to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do teachers in New Zealand perceive fathers' participation in ECE centres?
- 2) What do teachers consider as facilitators or barriers for fathers' participation in ECE centres?
- 3) What do fathers consider as facilitators or barriers for their participation in ECE centres?

- 4) Does a father-focused programme influence fathers' participation in ECE centres?

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

To this end, Chapter 2 includes discussion of the theoretical framework for the studies conducted in the thesis, a summary of the current research literature in regards with the context of ECE in New Zealand, partnership models from national and international perspectives, parental participation, and examples of intervention programme to enhance fathers' participation.

To answer the research questions, three separated studies were designed. Study 1 (Chapter 3) focused on the teachers' perceptions of fathers' participation (the main focus of this thesis), which informed the second study. Study 2 (Chapter 4) examined fathers' perceptions on their participation in ECE which provided data to compare teachers' and fathers' perceptions. Since the data from Study 1 and Study 2 highlighted the need of fathers-focused programmes, Study 3 was designed in an attempt to introduce a programme aiming at accommodating the perceptions of ECE teachers and fathers, and further examine its usefulness.

Study 1 (Chapter 3) investigated teachers' perceptions on fathers' participation in ECE programmes. This study was designed in an attempt to examine barriers and facilitators of fathers' participation in ECE. This study also tried to get a better insight of factors that would encourage fathers to take more active role in ECE programmes. This chapter further delves into the areas highlighted in partnership models to get a better grasp of teachers' perceptions.

Since enhancement of fathers' participation is not possible without understanding fathers' perceptions, Study 2 (Chapter 2) investigated fathers' participation in ECE programmes from fathers' perspectives. This study was designed in an attempt to highlight similarities and differences between ECE teachers' and fathers' perceptions of fathers' participation in ECE. The focus was to investigate factors that could bridge the gap between teachers' and fathers' perspectives to enhance their partnership models hoping to improve fathers' participation in ECE programmes, which in turn may contribute to the educational and physical development of young children. This study along with the results of Study 1 recognised the importance of valuing father-focused programmes that meet fathers' expectations. To this end, a father-focused programme working on emergent literacy was developed and examined in Study 3 (Chapter 5) as an example of father-focused programmes. A literacy programme was implemented since it was feasible to assess the outcome of the programme on both participating fathers and children along with the influence of the programme on non-participating fathers.

Study 3 (Chapter 5) examined the success of a father-focused intervention programme as a strategic plan to enhance fathers' participation in ECE programmes. Since it is believed that ECE centres should develop more father-focused programmes, an emergent literacy programme called Daddy Book Club was implemented by inviting fathers to come over to the ECE centres at mutually convenient time for several sessions and work with their own children on emergent literacy skills. Fathers' behaviours along with those of ECE teachers were observed. Additionally, educational attainment of the children was examined before and after the intervention to examine whether this partnership could contribute to the young children's academic success.

Chapter 6 presents discussion of the findings of the three studies in the context of the national and international research literature in order to provide informed theoretical and practical suggestions on the questions investigated in the thesis. This chapter also outlines the limitations of the study and suggests future research to overcome such limitations.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) has become very important in recent years due to the societal changes (Green, 2003; Jacobs & Kelley, 2006; J. M. White et al., 2011) which usually requires both parents work outside. This makes working parents use ECE services, along with other families who would like to have a good chance of education for their young children from early years (Baxter, 2007; Green, 2003). Like many parts of the world, almost all (96.2%) young children attend ECE programmes in New Zealand from birth to five years of age (Ministry of Education, 2015). This can be interpreted as young children spending significant periods in ECE instead of being with their parents. Given the importance of parents and ECE teachers in the educational development of young children (Ancell et al., 2016; McBride et al., 2001), it is crucial to find ways to keep parents involved in their children's daily educational programmes (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000; McBride & Lutz, 2004). Parental involvement and its positive impacts on children's academic successes have been supported by a large body of published research (Hornby, 2011; Palkovitz, 2005; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006). Additionally, parental involvement in children's early years' education and their partnership with ECE centres may contribute to children's educational attainment (Green, 2003; Palm & Fagan, 2008; Starkey & Klein, 2000).

Societal changes in 21st Century have led to changes in the traditional roles of fathers (Ihmeideh, 2014; Jethwani, Mincy, & Klempin, 2014). That is fathers are not considered to be the sole income provider or breadwinner for the households any more (Callister &

Fursman, 2013; Saracho & Spodek, 2008). Accordingly, fathers should share responsibilities in some other tasks such as care for their young children. This has called for research on recognition of the (positive) influences of fathers' participation in their young children's education and care. Research findings demonstrate that fathers' roles are crucial in their children's physical and educational development including better school performance, increase self-esteem and social behaviour development. Fathers are also believed to be benefited by such partnership. Participating fathers are more likely to feel less psychological distress, develop greater sensitivity, parental competence, and are more satisfied with their lives than non-participated fathers (Davidov & Grusec, 2006; Green, 2003; Radin, 1994; Saracho & Spodek, 2008; J. M. White et al., 2011).

Given the fact that traditionally mothers were supposed to be in charge of child care, and the fact that ECE sector is still mainly dominated by female staff (about 98% female staff according to (Farquhar, 2012), which argues for gender balance, fathers' participation in ECE programmes should be viewed important to provide young children with a male role model in their development. Male role model was interpreted in three categories: being a living model of traditional masculinity; an embodiment of discipline; and representing an alternative, gentler form of masculinity (Cameron, 2006; Sargent, 2005). This thesis particularly examined two categories of male role model; traditional muscularity and the gentler form of it. For example, father doing traditionally masculine activities such as drilling holes and putting hooks in as well as doing traditionally feminine activities such as caring and playing with babies. The fact that young children spend long hours in an ECE environment intensifies the importance of the presence of male role models for young children, too. Hence fathers' participation in ECE centres can be viewed as important to increase the exposure to male role models for young children in their educational environment.

There is a sufficient body of published research which contributed to the increased awareness of fathers' participation (Green, 2003; Jacobs & Kelley, 2006; McBride et al., 2001). However, research which precisely investigates the factors that may influence fathers' participation, and determines how to encourage fathers' participation in ECE centres/programmes seems underdeveloped. The current thesis is set to collect thoughts of ECE teachers and fathers in New Zealand to further shed light on how to enhance fathers' participation in ECE programmes. The current research programme is also an attempt to investigate facilitators and barriers of such partnership, and also examines the effects of an initiative (focusing on literacy acquisition as an example) on strengthening such a partnership.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

There are multiple reasons for the establishment of partnership between school, family, and community. Such partnerships can reinforce school programmes and environment. They can also provide an opportunity for offering family services and support, improving parents' skills and leadership. Moreover, such partnerships may connect families, school stakeholders and other people in the wider community assisting instructors with their work. Yet, the establishment of these partnerships is mainly aimed at helping children to accomplish their goals in school and in their life. If parents, teachers and other people (e.g., communities) give importance to one another as partners in children's education and care, a caring and children's need-oriented community would be established.

An act in America mandated partnerships as a voluntary national goal to be set for all schools during the 1990s. The majority of the US States and Districts have formulated (or are still developing) policies to set directions for schools to establish and maintain more

systematic connections with families and communities. These policies are a reflection of findings from various research as well as the accomplishments of previous pioneer educators who demonstrated that such goals can be achieved. These policies and programmes draw on a theory of how social organisations are connected to each other along with a framework of the basic elements of school, family, and community partnerships for children's learning. For example, given the growing interactions among schools, families, and communities, it is likely that children receive common messages from various people about the significance of schools and ECE centres on concepts such as hardworking, creative thinking, assisting one another and schooling.

There are two models to improve interactions between parents from one end and ECE service providers on the other end. Based on the external model of overlapping spheres of influence, three main contexts in which children learn and grow, namely, the family, the education environment (school), and the community can be combined or pushed apart. According to this model, some practices are performed separately by families, education providers, and communities with some practices done jointly to reinforce children's learning and development. The other model is the internal model of the interaction of the three spheres of influence which can show where and the way in which complex and essential interpersonal relations and patterns of influence are created among people at home, school, and in the community. Such social partnerships may be implemented and examined at the level of institution (e.g., when a head teacher/ECE manager at an ECE centre invites all parents to a meeting or sends the same communications to all families) and at an individual level (e.g., when a family and an ECE teacher meet in a conference or converse on the phone). Connections between teachers, families, community groups, entities, and services can also be incorporated and examined within this model (J. Epstein, 2011; J. Epstein et al., 2002).

Within the framework of a partnership, teachers and administrators establish a more family-like educational environment which requires a high rate of parental involvement. A family-like ECE centre considers each child's individuality, rendering each child feeling special and included. In fact, family-like educational settings are open to all parents (mothers and fathers), not just those that are easy to reach (mostly mothers). Such partnership (i.e., engaging both mothers and fathers in their young children's education) may strengthen the significance of ECE centres and programmes which in turn may improve children's skills and experiences with both genders equally in their education.

Despite the point that the interactions of ECE staff and fathers/male care givers do not seem very brilliant, partnership programmes may create a thrust of respect and confidence on which to engage fathers/male care givers in an educational setting which is believed to be dominated by female figures. Good partnerships are resistant to questions, ambiguities, controversies, and disagreements. They offer structures and processes to provide solutions to the problems; and are maintained (even reinforced) when the differences have been identified and respected (Duncan & Te One, 2014; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006).

2.2.1 Parent Participation Theories

Teachers, parents, researchers and policy makers unanimously assert the value of positive parent-teacher partnerships nationwide (Duncan & Te One, 2014; Hedges & Gibbs, 2005; Powell, 1996). Partnership is a relationship where each partner is respectful of the other, and purposefully builds a reliable and trusting relationship (Duncan, Te One, Dewe, & Te Punga-Jurgens, 2012). Given that parent participation in children's educational process is the central foundation in early year's education (Duncan et al., 2012; J. M. White et al., 2011), it is of great importance to investigate the teacher/parent partnership in ECE.

The most appropriate model to define relationships between teachers and parents appears to be the “partnership model” in which teachers are viewed as experts on education while parents are viewed as experts on their children. Relationships between these two parties (i.e., teachers and parents) can be viewed as a partnership that involves sharing of expertise and control. The model also focuses on well-being, development and education for children (Hornby, 2011). In ECE, “The traditional rhetoric surrounding partnerships is one of a shared understanding which assumes both the teacher and the parent have equal status and are equal contributors to the child’s experience” (Duncan & Te One, 2014, p. 26).

There are various approaches to reaching the objectives of such partnership (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Based on the power or responsibilities of the involved parties, partnerships can be formal or informal, vertical or horizontal (Duncan et al., 2012; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Stonehouse, 2012). Partnership may also be one-to-one or webbed relationships which could be either short-term or long-term (Hujala, Turja, Gaspar, Veisson, & Waniganayake, 2009). A partnership approach is much more likely to be effective when teachers and parents work alongside each other with positive attitudes. This approach highlights the importance of having trusting engagement connections and a commitment to one another while maintaining a balance between individual needs and differences and co-operation in caregiving (Duncan et al., 2005; Hedges & Gibbs, 2005; Milstein & Henry, 2000).

J. Epstein (2011) proposed the “overlapping spheres of influence” approach. In this approach there is an overlap between education system, family and community spheres which influences children’s achievements. Epstein’s model suggests that relationships between these spheres may result in academic and social benefits for children. A fundamental purpose of partnerships is to develop family-like schooling and community settings, and school-like

home settings. To achieve this, Epstein believes that teachers facilitate partnerships by creating “family-like” settings. Teachers should be welcoming to all family members, not just those members that are easy to reach. Teachers should think about programmes and services that accommodate family members’ needs and realities. These programmes should also be feasible to conduct. Thus guided by this approach, teachers should initiate parent-teacher relationships (J. Epstein, 2011).

From another perspective, Hornby (2011) developed a model from other views of parent participation. This model has combined various theories of partnership models and proposed a framework that includes parental contributions and parental needs. Hornby’s model consists of two pyramids connected at the base with one representing a hierarchy of parents’ needs, and the other a hierarchy of parent’s contributions. The pyramid of parental needs includes sharing information on children, collaboration with teachers, acting as a resource and policy formation. The other pyramid (parents’ contributions) includes channels of communication, liaison with school staff, parent education and parent support (Hornby, 2011).

The current study draws from both Epstein’s and Hornby’s models, because: they provide consistency and facilitate comparability in the assessment of father-teacher relationship; and they recognise that families, their needs and attitudes should be considered to enhance parent-teacher collaboration with the familial elements being considered for fathers as well as fathers’ needs, behaviours and beliefs.

2.3 Context of the Study

Before the emergence of the sociocultural framing of ECE, traditional perspectives regarding child development seem to have inspired various approaches to early childhood

programmes in New Zealand and internationally (e.g., Anning, Cullen, & Flear, 2008; Davies et al., 2013).

As an example, Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) draws upon the guidelines developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (an American organisation). DAP considers child development and knowledge as a recurring theme (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992). The literature delineates such foundational knowledge as a combination of the theories of child development put forth in the twentieth century, with Piagetian constructivism as the most recent one (Burman, 2016; Davies et al., 2013; Flear & Robbins, 2004; Lubeck, 1996).

Piaget puts emphasis on the knowledge constructed by each child individually and actively (Cannella, 1997). As Burman (2008, 2016) points out, Piaget makes use of three biological concepts, namely, assimilation, accommodation and adaptation with the aim of formulating a theory of logical development as well as knowledge organisation in children.

The theory developed by Piaget views learning (changes in developmental stage) as a result of the solutions a child finds for cognitive conflicts unfolding as the individual child engages in interactions with the surrounding world. This theory is concerned with an interpretation of development as a cumulative process whereby the child moves towards growing rational and abstract thought and functioning (Burman, 2016; Cannella, 1997).

Considered in the context of ECE, Piaget's constructivist theory is claimed to attach importance to the facilitation of a child's progression through developmental stages by creating a kind of environment that allows children to engage in self-directed, explorative game (Burman, 2008; Cannella, 1997; Cannella & Viruru, 2004).

2.3.1 The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Curriculum in New Zealand

New Zealand is known as a leading country in ECE, and also an internationally recognised example of having more integrated models of ECE (or early childhood education and care) for children from birth to school age (five years old). This New Zealand was ranked amongst the top third country members by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for its high rate of young children participating in ECE in 2006 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2014). Currently in New Zealand, the vast majority of young children enrol in a variety of early childhood programmes. Reports from the NZ ECE annual census in 2015 demonstrated that almost all children (about 96%) attend ECE programmes for at least several months prior to the compulsory schooling. The majority of enrolments takes place in licensed services (Ministry of Education, 2015). Licensed services include kindergartens, playcentres, education and care services, bilingual and immersion centres such as Te Kōhanga Reo and Pasifika centres, home-based services and the Correspondence School (Ministry of Social Development, 2010).

Obviously, services have a variety of their own operating structures, philosophies and affiliations (Ministry of Education, 2007, 2010). Building relationships with the child's parents is an important philosophy and the ultimate goal for ECE service providers in New Zealand. It is important to create an environment where families and parents feel welcomed and comfortable (Ministry of Education, 2008a, 2008b). A child's learning and development depends not only on the ECE environment they experience, but also on their home and wider social environment which requires a resilient partnership among ECE centres, families and communities. Connection of children and families in ECE centres provides greater opportunities for addressing health and social issues (Ministry of Education, 2006). In New

Zealand, working alongside families within the ECE programme has been a key part of the Te Whāriki (Early Childhood Curriculum) (Ministry of Education, 1996, 2017). One of the main goals of Te Whāriki in New Zealand is promoting collaboration with families and communities (Ministry of Education, 2012).

Early Childhood services were first established in the late nineteenth century in New Zealand (Walker & Rodriguez de France, 2007). These were charitable kindergartens for the colonial urban poor and the occasional charitable crèche (May, 2002, 2007), thus, were seen as an enlightened response to those less fortunate (Walker & Rodriguez de France, 2007). During the development of ECE in New Zealand, the first government's rationale for interest and investment in ECE was influenced by psychological theories of child development and understanding of the mother-child relationship. Government's interest was limited to kindergartens whose programmes fitted with the rationales for emerging state investment and/or intervention in the lives of children such as moral reform, child rescue and child health (May, 2004, 2007, 2011). By the 1970s and 1980s, new social movements such as feminism and biculturalism began to gain grounds in New Zealand (Walker & Rodriguez de France, 2007). Thus, a shift in the ideology of government began to address the concerns for women and children. Child and mother's equity were addressed so child care was considered as a right for women. The development and wide acceptance of Te Whāriki, as the curriculum in 2017, within the ECE sector identified a number of concerns about funding, quality, access, and participation in ECE (May, 2002, 2007, 2009; Walker & Rodriguez de France, 2007). Additionally, a 10-year strategic plan for ECE published by the Ministry of Education in 2002 based on three goals. These include promoting participation in ECE, enhancing collaborative relationships between ECE centres and parent support, and improving the quality of ECE. The implementation of the strategic plan has resulted in a period of

professionalization in this sector, including a move towards the teacher registration of all early childhood teachers, the development of sociocultural assessment exemplars 'Kei Tua o te Pae', pay parity for kindergarten teachers, a requirement for all early childhood centres to attract fully qualified teachers by 2012, funding by a wide range of professional development, and innovative practice schemes (May, 2002). This strategic plan also sets out a strong link between ECE centres and the family, community, social services, health services and schools, as part of a seamless educational paradigm in the wider context of New Zealand's family-friendly social policy (Walker & Rodriguez de France, 2007).

2.3.2 Different Types of Early Childhood Education Services in New Zealand

Early childhood education provides a valuable point where education and care options can be introduced to families. ECE centres can bring families together to share common dilemmas (e.g. in parenting) with staff and other professionals, and can build upon their capacity to defuse crises and form future actions. May (2007) suggests three broad political gazes in ECE in New Zealand including psychological, equity and economic gaze; each of which entails a special political and pedagogical language, as well as a special policy in ECE. These perspectives are categorised to 'during the late 1940s, late 1980s and currently in the 2000s'. In the 1940s, part-day kindergartens with qualified teachers and playcentres with educated parents were the main preschool provision. The centres' benefits were perceived to include a rich play environment for children and parental education opportunities. The benefits were not just for children, but were also for mothers to help themselves emotionally and physically (May, 2007). The emergence of family daycare programmes in the 1970s, Kohanga Reo (Maori immersion 'language nests') and bilingual Pasifika centres in the 1980s, created a diverse range of provisions.

Now in the 21st century, ECE in New Zealand occurs through a diverse range of services, including education and care services (private or community-based, full day or sessional), playcentres (sessional, parent collectives), kindergartens (sessional), Te Kohanga Reo (Māori immersion language nests), Pacific Island Language groups, and home-based services (a small group of children in a caregiver's home) (Ministry of Education, 2007, 2010, 2012). All licensed and chartered ECE services in New Zealand are required to operate their programmes in line with Te Whāriki, the national ECE curriculum despite the distinctive contexts across the early childhood provision services (Ministry of Education, 1996, 2017).

Privately-based and Community-based services are two general categories of ECE in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2012; Mitchell, 2002). Community-based services are those established as Incorporated Societies, Charitable, Statutory, or Community Trusts, or those owned by a community organisation (e.g., City Council). Community-based services are prohibited from making financial profits (Ministry of Education, 2012). On the other hand, Privately-based services have a window to earn financial profits and consider education as a business (Duncan, Bowden, & Smith, 2006; Mitchell, 2002).

From the perspectives of gate keepers, there are two main types of service in New Zealand named as teacher-led and parent-led services. In teacher-led services, about half of the staff in charge of education and care for children must be qualified/registered ECE teachers. Teacher-led services fall under the category of Kindergartens, Education and Care centres and Home-based centres (Ministry of Education, 2006). Kindergartens accept children between two and five years old and can have set morning and afternoon sessions for different age groups. Kindergartens are non-profit, community-based services managed by the Kindergarten Associations that work in close partnership with children's families.

Education and care services run all-day sessions, or flexible-hour programmes for children from birth to school age. The centres may be privately owned or owned and operated by a community group. Some centres have a particular language and cultural base; others have a specific set of beliefs about teaching and learning such as Rudolph Steiner and Montessori philosophy. In home-based services, education and care are provided for groups of up to four children at a time aged between birth and five years being run in either the educator's home or the children's. Educators must belong to a Home-based service supported by a coordinator who should be a registered ECE teacher (Ministry of Education, 2006).

In parent-led services, parents and family members are responsible for education and taking care of children. These types of services recognise the importance of parental education and participation in children's development. Parents have the opportunity to learn more about parenting as well as developing social and community networks which may enhance great parenting confidence. Parent-led services include Ngā Kōhanga Reo, Playcentres and Playgroups (Ministry of Education, 2006). Ngā Kōhanga Reo caters for children from birth to school age in the Māori language and environment. Parents and family members manage and operate the Ngā kōhanga Reo with the support and guidance of the Te Ngā Kōhanga Reo National Trust. Playcentres are collectively supervised and managed by parents for children from birth to school age. They have a strong focus on parental education as well as children's learning outcomes. Playcentres are supported by Playcentre Associations across the country. Similar to Playcenters, Playgroups are run by parents and cater for smaller groups of children from birth to school age and their parents (Ministry of Education, 2006).

The New Zealand government policies are to encourage centres in the ECE sector to become teacher-led services (Mitchell, Tangaere, Whitford, & Mara, 2006). This is because

in teacher-led centres qualified teachers are in charge of provision of child care and education.

Over the past decade, the ECE centres have increasingly resembled “schools” for small children, where education programmes are provided by early childhood teachers (Adema, 2006). Teacher-led services provide children with access to high-quality learning and developmental opportunities in early years. This safe and thoroughly monitored care provided by qualified teachers enables parents of young children to be part of the country’s workforce (Mitchell, Tangaere, Mara, & Wylie, 2008).

However, one of the known shortcomings of such services (teacher-led) is that little consideration has been given to the partnerships between parents/families, communities and service providers. Ignoring such a partnership in ECE may negatively impact the needs of children, families and communities over time.

While teacher-led centres are education-driven, parent-led centres focus more on children’s natural educational development in a family-like setting. In other words, while in teacher-led services, qualified teachers are considered as the leading figures in young children’s education, in parent-led services, parenting influences children’s education by offering support for families’ partnerships (Mitchell, Wylie, & Carr, 2008). Parent-led centres’ programmes are community, family, and cooperative based. Everyone in such centres is considered as an educator (parents and qualified teachers). This is in concordance to the Māori pedagogy that holds the threshold of all individuals being learners from the time they are born to the time they die (Pihama, Smith, Taki, & Lee, 2004). Parental involvement in the ECE programmes (e.g., parent education and leadership programmes) is associated with greater gains for both children and parents in parent-led centres in New Zealand (Mitchell, Tangaere, et al., 2006).

2.3.3 New Zealand Framework in Relation to Parent-Teacher Relationships

Family and community (whānau tangata) along with their relationship (ngā honoga) are the two principles of Te Whāriki in New Zealand's curriculum. There is a strong correlation between these two principles. The partnership of the extended family (whānau) with person (tangata) has been emphasised through culture, linkage and engagement (Hedges, 2013). Te Whāriki states that:

“children's learning and development are fostered if the well-being of their family and community is supported; if their family, culture, knowledge and community are separated; and if there is a strong connection and consistency among all the aspects of the child's world” (Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 42).

In addition, Te Whāriki suggests that children learn through interactive relationships with people, places and things. When considering partnership according to Te Whāriki, everyone contributes to the well-being of each other so involving parents in ECE is the first step towards establishing partnership between parents, teachers and children. Hence such a partnership may enhance successful learning for children and parents. However, establishing a positive partnership can be challenging, (Hedges, 2013).

Te Whāriki also considers belonging (Mana Whenua), communication (Mana Reo) and contribution (Mana Tangata) as the main strands in ECE. Belonging defines a sense that both children and their families experience in an environment where the family and the wider world are affirmed and extended; both children and their families know that they have a place, they feel comfortable with the routines, customs, and regular events, and they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviours (Carr, Lee, & Jones, 2004). Communication is

defined as promoting and protecting each child's languages and symbols of culture in Te Whāriki. Different aspects of communication are verbal and non-verbal, experiencing the culture, and discovering different ways to explore the world. Contribution as another strand considers opportunities for children to learn with and alongside others. Contributing includes relationship with peers, parents, teachers and other adults (Carr et al., 2004).

Teachers' roles in ECE have received a lot of attention with a large body of research literature focusing on the importance of teacher training and qualification. In the same vein, the Ministry of Education (2012) upholds the significance of qualified ECE teachers (Manu'atu & Kepa, 2003). It goes without saying that staff education or professional development plays an essential role in teaching young children. If it is believed that, in today's educational context, western knowledge and epistemology are the main yardsticks shaping the education and qualifications for teachers emphasising on western life style, it is worth to make teachers aware of the cultural diversity in New Zealand and the various ways of learning that may be useful for each cultural group. For example, as Taufe'ulungaki (2002) puts forward, in the contemporary world, education is mainly based on western culture and traditions which seems to be a relatively different from those of the Pacific people. Similarly, Vaoileti (2011) notes that Tongan students' performance in educational settings could be much better if their self-esteem, which emanates from recognition of their Tongan identity, the knowledge of their specific ways of learning and current knowledge are taken into account in the education system of Aotearoa New Zealand. Having said that, professional development such as training ECE teachers on the common biases in the field, raising cultural awareness and educating teachers of various strategies to relate to children and their families from a diverse cultural background in New Zealand may equip teachers to improve their practice (Campbell-Barr & Bogatic, 2017; J. M. White et al., 2011).

2.3.4 Quality and ECE

Concerning the ECE, the Education Review Office describes and assesses ‘quality’ education in early childhood. This office's mission is to contribute to an excellent education system that provides all New Zealanders with the knowledge, skills and values necessary to become successful citizens in the 21st century. In fact, the main aim of this office is to ensure that the government as the formulator of early childhood services provides high ‘quality’ education to all citizens. The vision set by the government with respect to ‘quality’ in early childhood is all children's educational attainment in literacy and numeracy skills which could help them become successful people in their life. All children should acquire the knowledge and skills required to contribute to the country’s economy, capability, and well-being. This system also needs to be responsive to educational priorities (Ministry of Education, 2012).

The ECE documents and policies have characterised in details what ‘quality’ entails in ECE with many criteria and standards determining the word ‘quality’, often used in policies with regulatory importance. It is important to know whether the word ‘quality’ is fully captured by Pacifican ECE teachers and parents. Therefore, failing to understand the real meaning of quality reduces the likelihood of the implementation of the Pacifican Language Nests meeting ERO’s measurement goals. According to Shor and Freire (1987), as long as the word has not been appropriately understood, there would be limitations in what people might do.

In fact, contemplation on the term ‘quality’ in the context of early childhood is very important. Mitchell, Wylie, and Carr (2008), characterised ‘quality’ in ECE as one of the essential parameters in attaining all outcomes measured. Mitchell et al. put emphasis on two main dimensions of ‘quality’, namely, staff qualification and ‘quality’ indicators. They elaborate on four indicators of ‘quality’ as follows:

- the ‘quality’ of staff and child interaction;
- the learning resources available;
- programmes that encourage children to engage ; and
- a supportive atmosphere for children to cooperate.

Podmore and Meade (2000) also list the following to exemplify ‘quality’ in ECE context:

- child centeredness;
- planning educational programmes ;
- satisfactory staff- child ratio;
- trained staff and continuous professional developments;
- stability of staff and children;
- small group sizes;
- mixed age grouping;
- staff commitment to age-integration;
- active staff ;
- democratic parental participation;
- L1 maintenance;
- cultural revival

In a similar vein, Podmore and Meade (2000) and Witte (2015) suggest indices to measure the interaction among teachers, student, and environment have been suggested.

Teacher training and qualifications are considered as one of the main aspects contributing to ‘quality’ education in ECE. Therefore, it is necessary to contemplate on the training and qualification to see whether they include a holistic approach.

2.4 Research Involving Early Childhood Teacher

The Ministry of Education along with the Ministry of Social Development, had funded a pilot programme entitled ‘ECE Centre Based Parent Support and Development Project’ in New Zealand; an initiative to develop the role of ECE centres as a community hub for the provision of parent support. The project aimed at helping the government to better understand what works in parent support programmes in New Zealand. The programme focused on parents with children aged from birth to three years as well as families at risk of poor health, education and social outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2006). The findings demonstrated teaching practices should be considered as the best support system for children and their families. The findings also highlighted the importance of reciprocity in parent-teacher relationships (Ministry of Education, 2009), (the focus of the current thesis).

Failure in the effectiveness of parent participation can result from a lack of understanding of key elements. The implications for the existing gap between what is said and what is done in the name of parent participation can be defined as barriers to partnership. Based on partnership models, teachers need to be aware of various barriers towards their work with families in order to build active parent-teacher relationships. Hornby (2011) has identified parents’ beliefs and perceptions, differences in teachers and parents’ attitudes along with agendas and language in use as optional barriers. Additionally, the research literature shows that it is crucial for teachers to have positive attitudes, specific skills and knowledge regarding families and their needs (Boult, 2006; Grant & Ray, 2009; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Wang, Deng, & Yang, 2016).

In an attempt to identify these barriers in ECE, Hujala, Turja, Gaspar, Veisson and Waniganayake (2009), found four factors which reflect parent-teacher partnerships including:

1. involvement in ECE services;
2. family centred professionalism;
3. parenting competence; and
4. shared responsibilities in education.

Understanding the specific barriers to parent participation is necessary since these may influence parental participation, in particular fathers' participation in ECE. In fact, father's role in educational development and attainment of their children is vital and needs further attention.

One of the important issues in education is parent participation, but parents and teachers do not seem to have an in-depth insight about what is implied by this term. Exploring the relationship between teachers and parents, three terms are more commonly used: *partnership*, *involvement* and *collaboration*. Parental involvement is defined as "participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children" (Jeynes, 2005, p. 245). Rodd's comments on the relationships between teachers and parents suggest a range of different understandings of the term *involvement*. She also uses the terms *engagement* or *participation* synonymously (Rodd, 2006). Parent engagement can be defined as meaningful and respectful partnerships and alliances between families and teachers that value dialogue across differences and form active parental involvement in supporting learning (Harris, Andrew-Power, & Goodall, 2009; Mutch & Collins, 2012). The difference between partnerships and involvement has to do primarily with the person who has power and authority. When there are partnerships, teachers encourage parents to express their concerns, ask for what they want, and extend their information about the child and home environment. A partnership is a relationship, not a set of strategies. Participation with parents arises from teachers' perspective, rather than activities in centres (Stonehouse, 2012).

Ward (2013) states that based on their needs, parents may require specific support to get involved in their children's ECE programmes. Ward also believes that finding appropriate ways of offering activities, information and support to encourage parents' involvement are part of ECE professionals' duties so all parents with differing capabilities can access ECE programmes. Participation takes place in the context of relationships. However, the meaning of participation can be quite different for various parties. For example, parents may provide what they perceive to be a high degree of participation, whereas in teachers' view, parents contribute only a small amount of participation. It is therefore crucial to draw attention to such difference and develop a mutual understanding because young children are directly encountered with ECE teachers and their parents. What may be primarily important from the child's perspective may not be the degree of participation but the quality of parent-child-teacher interaction in ECE programmes (Sabatier, 2003).

Parent participation is not about denying the professional role of teachers; it is about sharing responsibilities to enhance better education, well-being and development of children. For many teachers, especially those in ECE, parent participation means families' interference. Most teachers believe that parents are challenging centre's decisions and question teacher's professionalism (Wilcock, 2013). Wilcock asserts that parent participation must be a systematic and integrated approach. Parent participation should not be considered as an extra task in the centre's programme. Teachers must be aware of the home environment and be able to view all children within the context of their families (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Stonehouse (2012) states that when parents and teachers do not work together, they simply relate to the child without considering the whole picture.

According to the Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) ecological model, Smith et al. (2000) suggest that the effective outcomes in parent participation in ECE programmes are

evident when the needs of the parents are addressed by ECE programmes within each of the components of the ecological model. In this regard, the findings from the published research highlighted that an ECE programme must encompass a broad range of economic and social issues, both inside and outside the family in order to effectively serve parents' economic and social needs (Smith et al., 2000). This will also optimise ECE's influence on the development of children within the family and the wider community. Brendtro (2006) recommends that research should look closely at the child's immediate circles of influence (family, peers, school) and asks what the transactions of the child with the family, peers and school are, and whether this circle of influence creates stress or offers support for the child.

Duncan, Bowden, and Smith (2006), describe relationships with parents is evolved from working with parents to partnership with parents and to the call for collaboration with parents. They argue that this shift in discourse enhances a shift in expected outcomes for families participating in ECE programmes.

There are various forms of partnerships between parents and teachers. However, all forms of partnerships are not effective. Partnerships that are poorly designed based on deficit views, and partnerships that are not responsive to the need of families are considered ineffective, and even such ineffective partnerships could be counterproductive (Biddulph, 2004). On the other hand, effective partnerships are those that respect parents and children, are socially responsible, and are responsive to families and the social conditions.

Duncan and Te One (2012) investigated how ordinary activities in early childhood centres may enact extraordinary goals of early years' pedagogy by including families and communities in day to day ECE programmes. They explored theoretical constructs, teaching and organisational strategies to increase parent participation and positive learning outcomes for children and community well-being. The findings showed that building a learning

approach that increases adult participation may affect every aspect of teaching and learning, administration and organisation management. There is a need to reconceptualise New Zealand's understanding of ECE as child-centred services to one that is positioned as a community and parenting resource alongside a learning environment for children.

2.5 Father Participation Framework

2.5.1 The Role of Father Historically

The single greatest change in family life came when women with young children joined the workforce. The picture of a typical family no longer consists of a mother and children staying at home with the father going off to work each morning (Berger, 1998; Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 2011). Such a paradigm shift resulted from societal changes in the modern life has appealed to research and the development of educational policies focusing on father participation in their young children's upbringing in recent years (Lamb et al., 2011; Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006). Reasons for such a trend are largely related to the increased presence of women in workforce (Stanley, 2005). In past, fathers in New Zealand were viewed primarily as breadwinners besides their other roles (Callister & Fursman, 2013). In other words, fathers used to be viewed as the head of the family and the breadwinner. However, such a notion is no longer existent nowadays with fathers becoming more involved in child care duties at home (Melton, 2005). Interestingly in the New Zealand context (similar to the Western world views), fathers feel proud to be a participating dad, and they think that being a dad is really cool (Farquhar, 2008).

While fathers' views on parenting skills have been changed in the Western world, father participation has received little attention in the published research literature on ECE (Turnbull, Turbiville, & Turnbull, 2000). Lamb (1975) introduced the history of father

participation in educational research to help improve children's development. Although, there is some evidence of evolution in father participation in ECE in recent decades, fathers remain less present in their children's education than mothers (Melton, 2005). From an international perspective, Campos (2008) reports that most studies about father participation are limited by specific father participations (e.g., caregiving and participation in programme activities) with very little attention given to studies focusing on the impact of ethnicity, culture and family-identified father roles.

Changing gender roles, differences across cultural groups, and the rapidly increasing racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of fathers in New Zealand have called for increasing attention to the significance of fathers' behaviour and their impact on children's education and care in ECE (Callister & Fursman, 2013). Rise in the notion of the 'child-centred' family is predicated on the notion that children require particular types of support from parents in order to grow and develop. Research on parent participation predominantly focuses on mothers' role in children's educational experiences, and rarely discusses the role of their father. Mothers disproportionately fulfil responsibilities for participation in ECE programmes with fathers generally being viewed as playing a peripheral role (Melton, 2005). Despite the increasing focus on fathers' participation in ECE programmes over the recent years derived by positive influences of fathers on children's education and care (Lewis & Lamb, 2004; Palm & Fagan, 2008), father's actual presence in ECE still remains neglected.

A large number of support systems including family systems, developmental and educational sciences have been identified to improve children's education and care during early years. Fathers should also be recognised in such a support system (Hornby, 2011). This has appealed a significant growth in the number and the range of studies exploring the nature of the impacts of father participation on children's lives for the past 20 years. There is now

compelling evidence that the participation of fathers promotes better child well-being and outcomes in a number of key areas (Ma, Shen, Krenn, Hu, & Yuan, 2016; Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2008).

For a better understanding of fathers' participation, it seems necessary to further clarify the definition of father. Different definitions that reflect the changing role of father in families and societies are addressed by research based on the aims of the studies. These definitions include biological connections, social connections and legal connections (Palm & Fagan, 2008). The legal definition of fathers focuses around guardianship. Societal changes in women's roles and diversity in family structures have demanded changes in expectation and definition of father. Therefore, father's role as breadwinner has been re-defined as one of the family members who shares child care, housework and earning income with his partner (Hornby, 1995).

According to Hornby (1995), four types of fathers should be considered based on their involvement at home. First, uninterested and unavailable fathers who are rarely at home and spend little time with their children; second, traditional fathers who take little responsibility for care of their children's but are generally available to play with them. Finally, good fathers are those who help mothers in child care tasks and are willing to help. Despite the third group of fathers (i.e., good fathers) are willing to share care for their children, their participation in ECE programmes are not equal compared to mothers. The fourth type is non-traditional or active fathers who have equal participation in ECE programmes. In a normal family, fathers are redefined as co-parents with their wives or partners in providing financial support and child care and education duties.

Diversity in family structures such as separated and same-sex parents, teen and older fathers simply means that men are becoming non-resident fathers, step-fathers and mother's

new partner. Hence many children are growing up without their biological father. Similarly, the experience and needs of fathers from different ethnic and racial backgrounds vary both between and within cultures (Levant & Wimer, 2010). Men engaging in fathering roles vary by marital status, marital quality, type of fathering relationship to child, legality of parental status, educational levels, employment status, income, relationship with their own father, personality, health, parenting style, beliefs about father's role, cultural background, individual skill levels and motivation (Lamb, 2004).

A number of research has investigated men engaging in fathering roles. Fathers with higher parenting self-efficacy are more willing to engage in child care and, therefore, gain more parenting satisfaction (Chih-Yuan & William, 2007; Holmes & Huston, 2010; Jacobs & Kelley, 2006). Similar to mothers, however, fathers who perceive themselves as having greater skills at child care report better participation in their children's education and more responsibility for child care tasks (Sanderson & Thompson, 2002). In a similar vein, older fathers tend to have better resources and greater father role identification which in turn increases positive fathering (Castillo, 2011). Since older fathers tend to have more resources, they seem to highly enjoy their father-child relationship, and also seem to be more willing to interact with their children. Similarly, a father with high marital satisfaction seems to be encouraged by his partner (their child's mothers) to learn and invest more in parenting (Baxter, 2007; Kwok, Ling, Leung, & Li, 2013).

Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine (2011), examined father participation in ECE in three interrelated aspects: father's interactions with children (direct contact through caretaking and shared activities), their availability to children (being present or accessible, whether or not interaction is occurring), and their responsibility for children (ensuring that the child is taken care of and has access to the available resources). There are some specific

benefits from father participations in their children's lives in addition to the benefits from mothers including positive father participation which is usually associated with better education as well as social and emotional outcomes for children (Ma et al., 2016; Ward, 2013). The review of father participation by Downer, McWayne, and Gartner (2008), suggests that a father/man may participate in children's activity in the ways that are distinct from mother/female may do. Fathers behave in a way that is unique for children's development, especially in the areas of social skills. Fathers' role as a care giver might introduce realities of the world to young children. For example, like mothers, fathers spend time in the care and rearing of their children but their behaviour does not appear to be the same. Mothers' interactions with their children are dominated by caretaking, whereas fathers are behaviourally defined as playmates (Lamb, 2000).

Fathers' participation in ECE can be affected in many ways. Mothers' beliefs about the gender differentiation of family roles and their appraisal of fathers' parenting skills may influence fathers' participation (Kwok et al., 2013). For example, in Turkey mothers enrolled in the internationally recognized Mother Support Programme were asked for a Father Support Programme reported that their partners were obstacles in supporting what females have learnt in positively fostering child development (Dogruöz & Rogow, 2009). In contrast, in the UK, a local evaluation of the Webster-Stratton programme found some mothers thought that the intervention offered by the programme to enhance parents' participation would have been more effective if their partners had attended the investigation, too (Potter et al., 2012). In another study, Rienks, Wadsworth, Markman, Einhorn, and Etter (2011) found improvements both in the parenting alliance and in father-child engagement at home when fathers had participated in the intervention plan – whether with their partner or as a sole parent. There are also some studies which demonstrated that father's beliefs are more important than those of

their spouses in determining the amount of time fathers are engaged with their children (Cook, Jones, Dick, & Singh, 2005).

Mackay (2003) mentions that non-resident fathers and other kinds of fathers have an important role in promoting the development of their children. Although biological fathers seem to be the most appropriate model for child's well-being and development, research has proved that other male figures can also perform this role, too. Some studies have examined the role of social fathers (i.e., a male model who acts like a father to the child). Jayakody and Kalil (2002) reported that, on one hand, male relatives (e.g., uncles or grandfathers) can have a positive influence on children's education. On the other hand, children seem to be less responsive to emotional adjustments when their mother's partner attempts to offer them care.

Research on parent-child play used to mainly focus on mothers' role. However, it seems that such a research line has recently attracted attention to investigate father-child play and its effects on children's education and care (Hossain, Roopnarine, Ismail, Hashmi, & Sombuling, 2007; Roggman, 2004). The results of the study by McBride and Mills (1993) examining parent-child interactions indicated that fathers were considered as playmates while mothers as caregivers. Mothers spent a significantly higher proportion of their interaction time in functional and work-related activities whereas fathers spent a significantly greater proportion of their interaction time in play activities.

Ivrendi and Isikoglu (2010) examined father participation in ECE and also investigated attitudes about children's play at a public ECE in Turkey. The findings indicated that fathers frequently participated in their children's play, and they held positive views about play time. Father's socio-demographic characteristics such as income, working status, family types and children's genders could influence their participation as well as their views about play. Ivrendi and Isikoglu (2010) argued playing as the context of father-child relationships.

It is essential to note that while fathers' participation in their son's play may support their gender role development, girls may also benefit from their father's play participation. In ECE, father's interaction with their daughters in the context of play can contribute to the development of a variety of skills such as risk taking and problem solving in young girls.

2.5.2 Fathers in Early Childhood Education

The review of the relevant practices and theories of contemporary father–teacher partnerships in early year's education highlights the important role of fathers in their child's well-being and outcomes in a number of key areas. This participation may predict a good start to life-long learning that a male role model may develop for children (Ma et al., 2016; Glenda MacNaughton & Newman, 2001; McBride et al., 2017; Potter et al., 2012; Sarkadi et al., 2008).

Further, father partnerships in ECE appear to be a beneficial factor for children's educational development (Green, 2003; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006). Fathers may participate in children's activities in a distinct way from those of mothers'. Fathers may behave in a unique way in children's social skills development which highlights their role as a caring figure to familiarise children to the realities of the world (Downer et al., 2008; Roggman, 2004).

Given the importance of fathers' participation in ECE, what influences their participation in such programmes seems crucial. It seems that the nature and purpose of father participation in ECE context can vary depending on various perspectives of fathers, mothers and ECE teachers; those who are required to form a father partnership. Jay Fagan and Iglesias (1999) have identified four factors including child, father, mother, and centre's programme that could predict fathers' participation. Research has shown that parental skills, parents' and teachers' educational levels, child's gender, maternal engagement in the

programme, mother's gatekeeping and beliefs, fathers beliefs, and maturity of fathers' participation effort in a centre's programme affect fathers' participation (Cook et al., 2005; Jones & Evans, 2009; Kwok et al., 2013).

Studies on fathers' participation suggest that low participation of fathers in ECE is due to the lack of knowledge, skills, opportunities on the part of teachers, efforts to engage fathers, and finally gender balance in ECE centres rather than lack of interest from fathers to participate in ECE programmes (Farquhar, 2008; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006; Raikes, Summers, & Roggman, 2005). Given the importance of fathers' role, the presence of fathers in ECE programmes should be considered as a useful resource contributing to the quality of early years' education and care in ECE centres (T. Kahn, 2006; Maxwell, Scourfield, Featherstone, Holland, & Tolman, 2012).

Levine (1993) has outlined four factors in low rates of father participation in ECE including:

1. fathers' fears of exposing inadequacies;
2. ambivalence of staff members about father involvement;
3. maternal gatekeeping;
4. inappropriate programme design and delivery

McBride, Rane and Bae (2001), have figured out several issues related to the general factors as comprising, providing, training, support services, involving mothers in developing initiatives, creating a climate for fathers' participation, proceeding slowly, and continuing to meet mothers' needs. Given that all these factors can be linked directly or indirectly to teachers' perceptions and expectations, the starting point to consider fathers' participation is to examine teachers' beliefs and attitudes (Blackman & Mahon, 2016; McBride et al., 2017;

McBride et al., 2001; Stonehouse, 2012; J. M. White et al., 2011). To improve fathers' participation in ECE centres and programmes, increasing teachers' awareness through a realistic evaluation may lead to a better presence of fathers in ECE programmes.

Research evidence in ECE field highlights the importance of fathers' roles and the benefits of their participation in ECE programmes. However, a large number of studies in ECE has focused on parents (i.e., mothers and fathers), children and teachers (Raikes & Bellotti, 2006; Saracho & Spodek, 2008), and research on fathers seems scarce. Hence research on fathers/male care givers, in particular fathers' participation in ECE seems necessary (McBride et al., 2017; Mitchell, Haggerty, Hampton, & Pairman, 2006; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006). It seems also beneficial to investigate teachers' perceptions on fathers' participation in ECE along with fathers' perceptions in order to encourage fathers' participation in ECE programmes.

2.5.3 Fatherhood Models

Since the current thesis aimed at investigations into the nature of father-teacher partnerships based on the partnership models in the context of ECE, presenting a brief explanation of the current published models and surveys regarding fathers' participation seems necessary. The following section presents relevant theories and frameworks as the basis for the development of the survey developed and used in this thesis to tap into the teachers' and fathers' beliefs on fathers' participation in ECE programmes.

Lamb, Pleck, Charnov and Levine (2011), developed a three-part model of father participation focusing on interaction/engagement, accessibility and responsibility. The model is to facilitate the interpretation of fathers' participation by providing a useful framework to identify participated fathers (Sabatier, 2003). The model discusses fathers' participation with

children in terms of three interrelated aspects as: fathers' interactions with children, their availability to children, and their responsibility for children. Engagement is the first and most restrictive type of paternal participation that involves time spent in actual one-on-one interaction with the child (whether feeding them, helping them with homework, or playing catch in the garden). Accessibility is the second type of partnership that included activities characterized by less intense degrees of interaction. These activities imply paternal accessibility to the child, rather than direct interaction. Cooking in the kitchen while the child plays in the next room, or even cooking in the kitchen while the child plays at the parent's feet, are examples of accessibility. Responsibility is the final type of partnership is the hardest to define, but it is perhaps the most important of all areas as it reflects the extent to which the father takes ultimate responsibility for the child's well-being and care. Responsibility includes knowing when the child needs to go to the doctor, making the appointment, and making sure that the child meets this appointment. It involves more than helping out or baby-sitting; that is, a responsible father is not mostly the father who spends time in direct interaction with the child.

Similarly, in another study, Lamb, Pleck, Charnov and Levine (2011), identified four influential areas that may increase fathers' involvement. These areas include fathers' motivation to be involved in their children's lives, skills and self-confidence in fathering, appropriate support, and institutional factors such as employment.

Hawkins and Palkovitz (2002) modelled their inventory in an attempt to broaden fathers' participation beyond the amount of time they may spend with their children. Hawkins and Palkovitz developed a 26-item scale named the Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI-26) which could be utilised to assess fathers' rating of their own participation in ECE programmes. This inventory taps into nine dimensions including discipline and teaching

responsibility, school encouragement, giving support to the mother, providing, time and talking together, giving praise and affection, developing talents and future concerns, reading and homework support and attentiveness.

Given that Lamb's model has been recognised as one of the most popular models in the ECE field as well as the Hawkin inventory's multidimensional construct addressing affective, cognitive, ethical and behavioural components of fathers' participation in ECE, both models were used as the main theoretical foundation to address the indicators of fathers' participation and provided the bases for development of this study.

2.5.4 Teacher's Role in Participating Fathers

Early childhood teachers' beliefs about educational practice are shaped both by their initial teacher education and professional development and working with children in the ECE. The main purpose of parental participation in ECE is the well-being, learning and development of the child (Ma et al., 2016; Ward, 2013) that is part of a teachers' professionalism. Although, there are many interpretations of professionalism which argues the universal understating of professionalism, historically professionalism implies knowledge and commitment to service and occupation (Oberhuemer, 2004). McNaughton (2003) defines a professional teacher as someone who should have specialised knowledge that enables them to work with children aged between birth and eight years of age, someone who belongs to a group of people sharing a common purpose, standards and ethic in their work. Furthermore, Oberhuemer (2004) discussed the idea of early childhood teacher in professionalism where the quality of work is the key component of this role. Quality refers to interactions with children as social agents demanding highly developed listening skills and democratic dialogues. It also goes further considering centre management which features

shared knowledge and distributive leadership, and working with families inclusively (Cameron, 2006). Hence, working alongside parents is an important professional aspect of an ECE teacher which requires positive attitudes, skills, and knowledge about collaborative partnership for teachers. Developing effective partnerships requires working alongside parents and families as well as children. Moreover, teachers should consider parents as their co-workers rather than clients and look into having collaboration with them instead of authoritarian relationships (Katz, 1993; McBride et al., 2017).

While working alongside families is one of the most important aspects of being an early childhood teacher, it is an area that teachers receive little preparation or training. Parents are often reported to find communication with teachers stressful (Nieto & Bode, 2012). It is, therefore important to identify attitudes toward parents that are commonly held by teachers to identify what gets in the way of the development of effective parent participation (Blackman & Mahon, 2016; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Melton (2005) suggests that an ideal ECE programme would maintain a strong relationship between parents and teachers. Additionally, teachers' attitude is usually seen as the most important factor to initiate and foster such a relationship. Viewing teachers as professionals and parents as non-professionals is unhelpful. It does not credit parents with the unique and specialist knowledge and understandings they have of their own children (Lindle & Boyd, 1991).

Hedges and Gibbs (2005) reported that the family placement approach is a positive method to develop collaborative partnerships between teachers and parents. In a case study, two teachers experienced home placement that enabled them to improve their professional knowledge and attitudes towards collaboration with families. Teachers should be aware that “building relationships with children and families begins with the very first contact. First impressions can make parents feel welcomed or have the opposite effect” (J. Hayes, 2013, p.

21). It is also important for teachers to be non-judgmental about families and their backgrounds. Similarly, it is essential to be aware of parents' cultures, ethics and economic figures.

Negative attitudes in the professional interactions that teachers undertake with families have also been identified. Teachers' attitude to partnership is related directly and specifically to their own views, beliefs and experience (Blackman & Mahon, 2016; Ward, 2013). Hayes (2013) argues that to improve working alongside parents, teachers must examine their own assumptions, values and beliefs. It is assumed that, relationships with children, their parents and teachers are influenced by the lenses through which teachers view them. How they view the child and the parent can be influenced by their experiences, their culture and society within which they live prevailing theories and discourse and historical views of these concepts (J. Hayes, 2013). Teachers need to have a good understanding of parents' perspectives; that is, teachers must be able to see and appreciate parents' points of view. As mentioned earlier, a large body of research has been conducted on parents, mothers and children but research on fathers seems scarce. Additionally, given the societal change in the 21st Century which has challenged the traditional roles of mothers and fathers (Callister & Fursman, 2013), it is of great interest to find ways to enhance fathers' participation in ECE.

Hagan, Austin, and Mudaliar (2010) conducted an action-based research in two kindergartens to investigate the teacher-parent relationships. The researchers used the developmental action research model developed by Cardno (2003) for Education to find how parent participation in a programme could enhance their knowledge about children's play and how teacher-parent conversations about children's portfolio may improve parents' participation. As a result, teachers realised that initiating conversations and discussions about children could increase parents' participations as well as children's progress. Another New

Zealand Ministry of Education funded action research project, Centre of Innovation (Glass, Baker, Ellis, Bernstone, & Hagan, 2008) investigated the use of portfolios. The findings established that portfolios were useful as a means of communication to foster an inclusive environment and can open up new ways of supporting relationships and learning.

In order to fully understand the representation of fathers in ECE programmes, it is important to understand the salient beliefs of teachers that may inform interactions with fathers. As fathering has been defined as a socially-constructed role (Lamb, 2004; Palm & Fagan, 2008), the beliefs of teachers about fathering roles and fathers' participation in ECE programmes are a relevant focus of inquiry.

The most appropriate model for relationships between teachers and parents is considered to be the partnership model where teachers are viewed as experts on education, and parents are viewed as experts on their children. Relationship between teachers and parents can then form a partnership that involves sharing expertise and supporting well-being along with children's development and education (Hornby, 2011).

Hornby (2011) developed a model that combines the issues of theories of parents' participation and created a framework that includes parental contributions and parental needs. The model consists of two pyramids connected at the base; one representing a hierarchy of parents' needs, and the other one a hierarchy of parents' contributions. The pyramid of parents' contributions includes channels of communication, liaison with school staff, parent education and parent support. The other pyramid (i.e., parental needs) includes sharing information on children, collaboration with teachers, acting as a resource and policy formation.

One of the studies that developed collaboration between families and schools has been conducted by Epstein and her colleagues at John Hopkins University in the USA (J. Epstein, 2011). Epstein in her theory described that school, family and community spheres are overlapped. These three spheres may influence children's achievements. Epstein's research has demonstrated that relationships between these spheres may result in academic and social benefits for students. A fundamental purpose of such partnerships is to develop family-like school and community settings, and school-like home settings. To achieve this, Epstein and her colleagues have found that programmes and services provided by school and community need to be family-friendly; that is, they should take into account the needs and realities of family life, be feasible to conduct, and equitable toward all families.

The ecological theory, as another theory that focuses on parent-teacher relationships, was developed by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) which conceptualises child's development being influenced by a variety of interrelated social contexts. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) suggested four levels or systems in this ecological theory. The microsystem refers to the individual's immediate environments, such as the family or workplace. Exosystemic is the events that occur in the immediate environments but do not directly involve the person. The mesosystem entails the interaction of microsystems. The intersection of these two systems may have an impact on the individual that goes beyond the influence of each individual system. Macrosystem refers to more remote influences on individuals such as social change and governmental policies.

To further clarify these systems an example for each system is presented. In teacher-parent participation, the ECE should constitute a microsystem influence on the family. Exosystemic could be staffing changes in the ECE programme that may not directly involve parents but may have an indirect effect on them. Mesosystem includes imposed holiday

schedules by the ECE centre that does not fit with the demands of parents' work schedules.

Macrosystem refers to the ECE structure and policy.

Elliott (2005) presented a model called the Communication Accretion Spiral to improve interactions in ECE. Interactions between parents, families and teachers can change over five stages of communication represented in a spiral. This model distinguished between communications that consists of sharing basic child safety information compared to the more personal information. Elliott states that:

“In the beginning, conversations are focused on communication exchanges about children's physiological and safety needs. As parents and staff develop a shared relationship around the child, the exchange of information begins to move beyond the child's physiological needs and state of well-being into communications about the child's individuality and the family as a whole” (Elliott, 2005, p. 52).

Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson (1998), proposed the family systems model. According to this model, family is a unit of organised interdependent individuals. The individuals are best understood in the context of the whole unit, where the functioning of the individuals is related not only to the individuals themselves, but also to the complex system of behaviours within and between members of the system.

Brooker (2008) suggested a model called Triangle of Care which involves partnership between the teacher, the child and the parents. In the model sharing information and support are mentioned as the basic steps for relationships between the members of the triangle.

The Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI-26), explained above, can be considered as a useful tool to tap into the areas that need further improvement to fully enhance fathers' participation in ECE programmes (Hawkins et al., 2002).

The One-Stop-Shop approach was described by Wigfall (2002) which has been taken by the Coram Community Campus in England. This programme provides the range of services for young children and their parents, including care, education, health, parent support and other services (for example, a child psychologist and social worker), at ECE centres.

Sure Start is another UK strategy which was designed to provide a cross-departmental, joined-up- service to work with parents and children to promote physical, intellectual and social development of preschool children, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to ensure that they are ready to thrive when they get to school (Anning, 2004).

In England, Whalley and the Pen Green Centre Team (2006) have mentioned successful ways of working with hard to reach families. The Pen Green Centre Team suggested planning and assessments whereby parents can be offered training and support to engage in their children's education. Additionally, a two-way model was suggested which requires parents to be encouraged to participate in learning and teachers to reflect on the participation of parents to their own work with children. In New Zealand, ECE centres for children of teenage mothers illustrated these strategies, with some modifications to make it contextually appropriate (Mitchell, Tangaere, et al., 2006). This model seems very useful for fathers' participation in ECE programmes considering fathers as busy individuals with work and those who can be in a group of hard to reach.

The non-governmental family and community centre (Te Aroha Noa) developed its own particular blend of ECE, parent support and development in New Zealand. Munford,

Sanders, Maden, and Maden (2007) explained the experiences of Te Aroha Noa, a teacher–parent-led model. The Te Aroha Noa approach is a promising model that blends the core components of highly effective early learning and parent support programmes identified in the international literature with culturally and socially responsive management practices that make it relatively easy for parents to become highly engaged in the programmes. Response to the needs of both family and children are the key point of the programme. It means at all levels, the family and children are considered parallel, instead of starting as an ECE programme and adding on family development, or as a family development service and later including ECE (Warren, 2003). Since 1990s Te Aroha Noa, provided playgroups for parents to feel confident, learn and share their knowledge about their children and also help them to be an operator of the group. All parents (employed or volunteer worker) and qualified teachers are considered as experts to increase the social relationship, children’s and family’s well-being.

The Centre of Innovation (COI) (Glass et al., 2008) research project was carried out by teachers of Citizens Preschool and Nursery between 2005 and 2007 in New Zealand. The one-stop-shop model was established within the early childhood community at the centre with the appointment of a family support worker. The COI research findings demonstrated a model for collaboration of early childhood teachers with a family support worker within an ECE centre to support families.

The Whānau Toko I Te Ora, delivered by Te Ropu Wahine Māori Toki I Te Ora, is a national parenting programme for Maori Whānau which is delivered through home visiting, a whānau learning programme and group support in New Zealand (Livingstone, 2002).

As mentioned earlier, teachers’ attitudes towards fathers’ participation have been considered as an important factor in ECE which may influence (either facilitate or hinder)

fathers' participation (J. Epstein, 2011; Green, 2003; McBride et al., 2001; Melton, 2005; Mitchell, Haggerty, et al., 2006; J. M. White et al., 2011). Kahn (2006) has outlined that positive teacher's attitudes may enhance fathers' participation in ECE centre. Likewise, McAllister, Wilson, and Burton (2004) have noted that teacher's attitudes may facilitate father-teacher interactions. Farquhar (2012) suggested that teachers with positive attitudes may consider fathers' role very important in their children's education. White et al. (2011) examined staff's attitudes to assess the level of father-friendly environment in ECE programmes. McBride et al. (2001) conducted an intervention to focus on teachers by providing them necessary knowledge "to successfully plan, implement, and evaluate specific initiatives to encourage father/ male involvement in their program" (p. 80). They observed that the initial low participation of men/fathers at their intervention site was due to "lack of knowledge, skills, and opportunities on the part of staff members" (p. 81) rather than lack of interest from fathers and families themselves.

While research has argued for the need to engage teachers, understand their attitudes, and work to lower barriers when implementing paternal participation efforts in ECE (J. Fagan, Newash, & Schloesser, 2000; McAllister et al., 2004; J. M. White et al., 2011), few studies have tried to develop and evaluate assessment tools of attitudes focusing on fathers' participation in ECE. Programmes desiring to identify and resolve barriers of fathers' participation need to explore information about teachers' attitudes and perspectives of fathers' participation, since teachers and fathers should work in partnership to enhance fathers' participation.

2.6 Research Involving Fathers

2.6.1 Father Participation in Educational Practices

Father participation in ECE is defined as direct and indirect connections that fathers have with ECE centres including selecting a programme, participating in programme related activities, assuming responsibility for children's health and well-being in the programme, and supporting joint programmes and family goals. Fathers come to ECE centre with some set of ideas about the programmes. That is, fathers may connect to formal activities which may have some effects, either positive or negative, depending on their personal experience during their own education. They may also take part in less formal settings which emphasises child play as the primary pathway to learning. Hence, this programme could be considered as a useful way to encourage father participation (Palm & Fagan, 2008).

Marsiglio, Roy, and Fox (2005), proposed situated fathering as a conceptual framework for understanding fathers' participation in ECE. They argued that two sets of primary and secondary characteristics provide different aspects of fathering. Primary characteristics include physical properties, temporal dynamics, symbolic, social structure and public/private spaces. Secondary characteristics are institutional/cultural, transitional, personal power and control, gendered attributes and fatherhood discourses. Both sets provide ECE centre with a better understanding of the community and the people. For example, to plan a suitable programme for a centre, it would be useful to consider cultural diversities, social status (social structure) of a community and father's education in order to attract majority of fathers.

Father participation has positive influences on both fathers and children. Father participation may be varied based on the time and level of expectation. Teachers need to keep

in mind that parents can feel intimidated and overwhelmed in educational centres so a lack of participation does not always mean a lack of concern (Dockett & Perry, 2007). As compared to mothers, fathers are often unrecognised in ECE. Fathers also find it difficult to assert their participation. Fathers are known to participate with less frequency in ECE programmes that tend to be designed by and for women; such programmes may utilise help and support from parents in a more female-based context (Palm & Fagan, 2008).

One of the factors that influence fathers' participation in ECE is fathers' attitude about their own participation. Although there are few studies addressing this issue, fathers enunciated positive attitudes about participation in ECE programme in most of these studies (see Palm & Fagan, 2008 for a review). Hence to delve into the question of why fathers' participation is seen little in ECE programmes, it would be worth addressing the factors that may restrict fathers' participation including their comfort, convenience, knowledge of ECE and mothers in dissuading fathers. It is also important to ask fathers about their beliefs regarding their participation in ECE and how their attitudes shape teacher's behaviours (Melton, 2005).

Mothers have a significant role in fathers' participation in ECE programmes, too. They can encourage or discourage father participation directly or indirectly. Walker and McGraw (2000) have shown that mothers play a pivotal role in facilitating the father-child relationship in their home environment. Research has suggested that teachers and mothers should not be eager to see fathers' participate in ECE unless they do consider ways to accommodate fathers' needs in the programmes. In a study reported by McBride et al. (2001) the staff members of an ECE centre were trained to encourage and facilitate father/male participation in their programmes. When the results were compared with a controlled group (another similar group with teachers who were not trained to facilitate fathers' participation),

the researchers found that the treatment site was significantly more successful than that of the control group in involving fathers in their programmes. The findings suggest that teachers' awareness may facilitate a better rate of fathers' participation in ECE programmes.

Considering the general view that mothers are still considered as the participated parent at ECE programmes, it can be argued that fathers may need support from both ECE teachers and mothers to be seen in ECE centres.

Additionally, some special activities and facilities should be provided to enhance fathers' participation. It is important to understand how teacher's beliefs regarding fathers' role may impact fathers' participation efforts, and how fathers perceive their roles in relation to teachers (Melton, 2005). Fathers prefer to take part in ECE with family members, in particular their partners. It seems they feel comfortable and secure about parenting judgement. Raikes and Bellotti (2006) reported that home visiting may be considered as an essential factor to improve fathers' participation especially for non-English speaking and less educated fathers. Green (2003) examined ECE teachers' effort to involve fathers in their programmes. The findings indicated that sending written correspondence to fathers even if they live apart from their children, leaving a space on the enrolment form for fathers' information, inviting fathers to centres to participate in educational activities and hiring male staff would increase father participations in ECE programme.

The research by T. Kahn (2006) discovered the extent to which fathers in England participated in ECE centres and the factors that facilitated or limited their participation. The findings suggested that while staff recognised the importance of father participation, fathers did not feel comfortable in ECE centres. Possible strategies for increasing fathers' participation have been emerged from these findings are as follow:

1. increasing the presence of male teachers;
2. planning activities for fathers;
3. staff training to raise awareness of gender issues

In New Zealand, a low rate of fathers' participation is evident in ECE programmes, despite a government goal which is to increase children's participation in non-parental care (teacher-led service). In contrast, fathers' participation is strong at non-professional care (parent-led service) such as Playcentres and Ngā Kohanga Reo (Farquhar, 2008). This contradiction calls for further investigations to find the reasons and support ECE centres to further encourage fathers' participation in ECE programmes.

Farquhar (1999) states that working in an ECE centre is a kind of feminist's profession in the NZ context. She reports that more than 98 percent of the ECE teachers are female. Many children spend little or no time in the company of a responsible male adult in their early years' education. Few fathers get the opportunity to spend meaningful periods of time with their own children. In addition fathers do not feel welcomed and comfortable to participate in ECE programmes (Farquhar, 1997, 2008). Results from a research conducted by Child Forum Early Childhood Network (Farquhar, 2012) demonstrated that increasing men in the ECE sector may bring benefits for children, staff and fathers. The benefits are that children enjoy their free access to male role models, fathers feel that they can contribute to their children's educational goals set by the ECE programme, and staff could establish good relationships with fathers which in turn may enhance fathers' participation.

Although teaching is a high demand profession in NZ these days, questioning men's masculinity and parenting ability are the two most common considerations that reduce fathers/males' participation in ECE programmes (Farquhar, 2012). Therefore, lack of male staffing in ECE can be considered as the factor that may hinder fathers' participation.

Research has also demonstrated that fathers may participate in ECE programmes more if some specific efforts are made for them. Palkovitz (2005) has listed 15 ways to encourage father participation including communicating, teaching, monitoring, engaging in thought processes, providing, showing affection, protecting, supporting emotionally, running errands, caregiving, engaging in child-related maintenance, sharing interests, being available, planning, and sharing activities.

Another factor in ECE programmes variability is to increase fathers' participation, and to plan programmes that consider the importance of fathers. A five stage programme to improve fathers' participation in ECE defined by McAllister et al. (2004), is an attempt to enhance fathers' participation. In Stage 1, the roles and needs of fathers are discussed with mothers, but the mother-child dyad was the main focus of the programme. In Stage 2, the programme attempts to involve fathers but primarily through male-only activities. In Stage 3, there is a shift from male-only activities for fathers to include fathers in all aspects of the programme. In Stage 4, the programme requires staff to think more holistically about fathers. Staff will engage fathers in relation to their parenting concerns but they also work with men around their own personal goals. In Stage 5, fathers are viewed as co-parents. Staffs think more reflectively about the father's relationship to his child, and they encourage fathers and mother to think reflectively about their own relationships to the child.

One study examined the relationship between fathers' workplace supports and their participation in their child's ECE programmes. It concluded that fathers were more engaged in their child's programme when they have flexible employers such as allowing employees to bring work home, take time off to care for sick children, and to attend ECE centre's events (Jay Fagan & Press, 2008).

Father-focused activities may be another way to create a male space within ECE programmes that supports men in exploring their roles and learning new educational skills. The fathers' level of participation with their children should be considered as an important factor in how fathers' participation is enhanced ECE programmes. This is, however, mediated by fathers' perceptions of the programme goals, and the participation opportunities that ECE programmes should make accessible to fathers.

In short, all models presented in this section calls for father-driven initiatives by ECE centres so fathers feel useful and are encouraged to participate in their children's early years' education. However, what remains here is that what programmes can entice fathers to participate in ECE programmes. It is also of great importance as whether such initiatives are beneficial for the children to strengthen the educational goals of the centres. Next section presents some literacy intervention programmes as examples conducted in ECE settings to examine fathers' participation rate.

2.6.2 Father Intervention Studies

A number of ECE programmes aim to give information and offer training to fathers to increase their participation. Several of these programmes have taken great strides toward improving fathers' participation (Raikes & Bellotti, 2006; Raikes et al., 2005). For example, Fathers-in-Training (FIT) primarily focuses on strengthen families by considering services for fathers. FIT offers 20 weekly training sessions that focuses on everything from finances to responsible fathering and to work with support systems (Ancell et al., 2016). As another example, the National Centre for Fathering is a non-profit research and education organization whose mission focuses on fathers' participation through training programmes. The centre also provides general information such as videos, stories, and articles for fathers

of young children with disability. Additional examples are the Head Start and Early Head Start programmes which prioritised fathers' participation in 2004. The programmes aim at discussing ways to increase fathers' participation. The goals are to ensure that staff understands the benefits of fathers' participation so they facilitate more effective fathers' participation (Horn, 2004). As a result, Head Start has developed a series of handbooks that explain the importance of fathers' participation, explores barriers and ways to overcome them, and how to develop a father participating plan (i.e., practical ways to participate fathers such as letting them know that they can provide specific benefits to their child). These programmes specifically target fathers' knowledge, skills, and commitment to the fatherhood role. They also encourage research concerning paternal participation to develop programmes suitable for young children and their parents.

As described, a number of programmes to promote fathers' participation in their children's ECE centre such as out of the centre walk, talk about father's job, sport activities, etc. (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006; Tamis-LeMonda, Baumwell, & Cristofaro, 2012) have been identified. However, ECE centres seem rarely initiate developing plans to implement such activities for fathers' participation. Lack of implementation of such plans makes it hard to verify the practical outcomes of such activities. This thesis also aimed to implement a father-focused activity to examine its benefit as a typical example of father-focused programmes. Next section will converge research of father-focused programmes with a focus on New Zealand.

2.6.2.1 Fathers' Participation in Literacy Studies

New Zealand suffers from one of the most serious gaps when it comes to the difference between good and poor achievers in literacy (Martin, Mullis, & Kennedy, 2007).

According to Tunmer and Prochnow (2009), one of the reasons for such a gap is low literate cultural capital with which children, particularly poorest achievers, start school. (Literate cultural capital is used to refer to “literate socialisation of children). The cognitive assessment in early childhood, or at school entry, serves as indicators of literacy-related activities done at home or community environment.

According to Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) cognitive skills including letter-knowledge, oral language and sounds awareness on hearing words (phonological awareness) are considered as the main indicators of emergent literacy (G. Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The biological studies show that these cognitive skills and knowledge develop from birth. They draw on the idea that literacy can be interpreted as a continuum where cognitive skills incessantly build on existing skills and knowledge. The cognitive skills which are collectively named as emergent literacy constitute the basic knowledge (G. Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Emergent literacy can be facilitated within environments where children are fully engaged in the application of literacy skills, and try to ensure that it is being valued within their community (McNaughton, 1995; Tolchinsky, 2004). In fact, literacy immersion enables children to make appropriate use of literacy knowledge (Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002), with more frequent literacy engagements and interactions resulting in the enhancement of cognitive literacy skills (Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002).

Literacy can come in various forms that are culturally and socially bound as are interactions with print and oral language (Diaz, 2007). According to McBride–Chang and Kail (2002), various forms of culturally and socially constructed literacy practices can result in respective emergent literacy if children are fully engaged in it. When in his/her early childhood, the individual has a range of experiences with print, providing him/her with

chances to enhance the skills of emergent literacy (Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002; Varghese & Wachen, 2015).

Engaging in direct interactions with resources allows the child to develop three main components of emergent literacy. For example, reading a story book and the resulting interactions provide the children with the main ways whereby they can engage in interaction with literacy. This promotes the development of alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, and vocabulary (e.g., L. M. Justice & Pullen, 2003; Mol, Bus, de Jong, & Smeets, 2008).

The various kinds of interaction with print when reading a book can be mediated by parents, and the child's temperament, resulting in the emergence of individual differences in emergent literacy skills (Spedding, Harkins, Makin, & Whiteman, 2007). Exposure to print socially and culturally in ECE allows for more experiences for children who may have limited literacy exposure at home (Varghese & Wachen, 2015).

In the context of New Zealand, the learning consequences of ECE reiterated in the curriculum with regards to early childhood Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996, 2017), focuses on encouraging children to enhance their learning dispositions and working theories about themselves as well as the surrounding world. Therefore, preparation for the transition to mandatory schooling has been limited (Blaiklock, 2008; Diaz, 2007).

The basic philosophy of learning draws on learning through holistic development and making connection between experiences instead of teaching specific skills explicitly (Blaiklock, 2008). The outcome is teaching literacy skills to young children should not be emphasised according to the Te Whāriki, which holds the argument that no explicit teaching of literacy skills or alphabet knowledge should occur at this age (Blaiklock, 2008; McLachlan

& Arrow, 2010). As a result, educators are likely to disregard the specific skills that children can learn, putting emphasis on oral language and children's dispositions (McLachlan & Arrow, 2010).

Teachers' perceptions and knowledge are considered as a concern when it comes to the implementation of literacy skills within the framework of Te Whāriki (McLachlan, Carvalho, de Lautour, & Kumar, 2006). Effective implementation of literacy skills in line with the policies stated in the Te Whāriki require teachers' in-depth knowledge of literacy acquisition as well as satisfactory knowledge of culturally and socially appropriate approaches to literacy practices (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Foote, Smith, & Ellis, 2004; McLachlan et al., 2006).

In short, it is almost impossible to facilitate children's emergent literacy when teachers themselves have insufficient knowledge of how literacy skills develop among young children, or when teachers' perceptions do not involve the importance of emergent literacy for individual children at a quite young age since children begin formal instructions at school (Anning et al., 2008; Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009).

2.7 Summary

Given the rise in the number of children attending ECE in New Zealand in recent years which might be due to the societal changes in the mainstream of the 21st Century, it is of great importance to investigate models focusing on partnerships among parents, teachers and ECE centres to scaffold children's emotional and educational development in early years besides their care. The societal changes in 21st Century in most countries, in particular the Western world, has questioned the traditional role of fathers as breadwinners and mothers as

babysitters, and has encouraged mothers join workforces. This also led to children spending longer hours in ECE centres which calls for resilient educational development in ECE.

However, research on models of partnerships highlights the fact of respecting all aspects of a child's life to ensure their well-being, fathers' role in early years' education seems relatively underdeveloped. While research seems to develop models of partnerships to consider how to bring the gap between ECE centres and parents in supporting young children's development, when it comes to fathers' or male care givers' roles, despite the fact that all sectors admit the importance of fathers, research seems underdeveloped. Hence the current thesis was planned to investigate this issue by tapping into attitudes and beliefs of teachers alongside fathers to pull out the similarities and tease apart the differences so fathers' participation in ECE programmes can be enhanced.

This chapter reviewed the current published research on partnerships and the important roles of ECE teachers, centres, mothers and fathers in educational development of young children. The chapter provided the theoretical framework for the current thesis which theoretically examined the current partnership models by investigating the attitudes and beliefs of ECE teachers and fathers separately in an attempt to improve such partnerships.

This chapter also presented the theoretical rationale for the studies conducted in the current thesis and briefly delved into some of the questionnaires (as examples) used to consider various areas in the partnership models. The chapter also presented a research summary of literacy intervention programmes reported in previous studies to provide a sound ground for the intervention study conducted as part of this thesis research programme to verify whether intervention programmes can improve fathers' participation in ECE centres

Chapter 3

Study 1: Fathers' Participation in Early Childhood Education

Centres: Teachers' Perceptions

3.1 Introduction

The review of the relevant practice and theories of contemporary father–teacher partnerships in Early Childhood Education (ECE) highlights the important role of fathers in their child's well-being and outcomes in a number of key areas. This participation may predict a good start in children's life-long learning as well as male's role model in children's development (Glenda MacNaughton & Newman, 2001; Potter et al., 2012; Sarkadi et al., 2008).

Studies on father participation suggest that low participation of fathers in ECE is due to the lack of knowledge, skills, opportunities on the part of teachers, efforts to engage fathers and gender balance rather than lack of interest from fathers (Farquhar, 2008; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006). Given the importance of fathers' role, the presence of fathers should be seen as a useful resource contributing to the quality of education and care in ECE (T. Kahn, 2006; Maxwell et al., 2012).

Levine (1993) has outlined four factors in low rates of fathers' participation in ECE including: 1) fathers' fears of exposing inadequacies, 2) ambivalence of staff members about father involvement, 3) maternal gatekeeping; and 4) inappropriate programme design and delivery. McBride et al. (2001) have figured out several issues related to these general factors comprising providing training and support services, involving mothers in developing

initiatives, creating a climate for father s' participation, proceeding slowly and continuing to meet mothers' needs. Given the importance of these factors and issues, it seems warranted to investigate fathers' participation from ECE teachers' perspectives; that is, to examine teachers' beliefs and attitudes of fathers' participation in ECE (McBride et al., 2001; Stonehouse, 2012; J. M. White et al., 2011). To improve fathers' participation in ECE centres and programmes, increasing teachers' awareness through a realistic evaluation may lead to a better presence of fathers in ECE centres.

There are various and complex reasons for why fathers are neglected in ECE centres, with few practices/initiations including fathers. To overcome this problem and to involve fathers more in ECE, perhaps a more practical solution could be targeting teachers by briefing them on how to meet fathers' needs and acknowledge their role and expertise as parents.

Therefore, the current study (Study 1) of this thesis aimed at examining teachers' beliefs/perceptions; such an exploration may provide evidence to facilitate fathers' participation in ECE centres.

In particular, this study aimed at investigations into: a) teachers' understanding of fathers' skills; b) exploring how fathers may participate in centre's programmes; and c) examining how ECE programmes can enable fathers' participation in the programme and the educational life of their children. These aims have been formulated to the below research questions to provide an easier index:

- 1) How do teachers in New Zealand perceive fathers' participation in ECE centres?

- 2) What do teachers consider as barriers and facilitators for fathers' participation in ECE centres?

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Study Design

The present study employed a quantitative method to elicit and explore the perspectives of teachers regarding fathers' participation in ECE in New Zealand. The quantitative method can be defined as a study which asks specific narrow questions, collects quantifiable data (e.g., use of measurement and observation) from participants, analyses the measured attributes using numeric indices statistically to test theories, infers knowledge, and explains cause and effect relationships (Harwell, 2011; Mertler & Charles, 2005). The two most commonly used quantitative methods are surveys and experiments (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Mutch, 2005). A survey is very useful for gathering large-scale data in order to generalise the results. A questionnaire is the most useful tool to survey large number of people. The rationale for utilising a quantitative method in the current study was that the quantitative data and results seemed to be an appropriate way to investigate the research question (identify the facilitators and barriers of fathers' participation from teachers' perspectives in ECE). To this end, the current study employed a descriptive research design to collected data via a researcher-made questionnaire.

The developed questionnaire, named Father Participation Questionnaire (FPQ), was modelled on and adapted from other questionnaires (details in section 3.2.4). The FPQ aimed at tapping into paternal issues in ECE. It was piloted on ECE teachers (n=57) in Christchurch and Rotorua, New Zealand. These regions were selected based on convenient sampling

method but the respondents were selected to represent the target participants after ensuring that the questionnaire was a reliable and valid measure. The questionnaire required minor modifications, including deletion of a few questions which were ambiguous, and reverse scaling for some other items. Then the final version of the questionnaire was distributed across ECE centres in New Zealand. Finally, the data collected from a larger number of participants (n=100 including those who participated in the pilot study) shaped the data set for this study.

3.2.2 Participants

Following the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC) of University of Canterbury approval (Appendix 1) and relevant approvals from the ECE associations in New Zealand to conduct the study, standard procedures and confidentiality measures for participants, along with the management permissions for entry into the study, were followed. The researcher administered the measure to all participants focusing closely on two areas: respecting early childhood teachers; and minimising risks of harm to them. For example, while anonymity among participants and principals could not be guaranteed due to the fact that participants and non-participants might have known each other, anonymity of the centre(s) and all participants in presentation of the findings was maintained.

Contact details for all ECE centres in the Canterbury region and ECE associations in New Zealand were gathered via online search. Details of New Zealand's ECE centres are presented in Chapter 2 (Literature Review). All centres (approximately 140) including those with private owners and those that were government based were approached via email and the research aims were introduced and all teachers in the centre were invited. Initial expressions of interest in the study were received from 25 centres and one association

(comprising 58 centres) on behalf of their teachers. The Father Participation Questionnaire (FPQ) was circulated as a hard copy and an online version using Qualtrics, to the Centres that agreed to participate in this study. All participants were also provided with information sheets about the project; the survey (both hard copy and soft); and consent form (see Appendices 3 and 4). Information letters informed the participants about the goals of the study, the researcher's responsibilities and how they could participate in the study. The participants were reassured about their rights including the right to withdraw from the study at any time they wished for no penalty and their privacy. The consent form informs the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project. The consent form further requests voluntary participation, and informs participants of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time.

One hundred and nineteen surveys were received from teachers including completed or partially completed questionnaires. Nineteen questionnaires which were partially completed (less than 25%) were excluded which left 100 complete questionnaires received from all over New Zealand.

The participants were 100 teachers (87 females and 13 males) aged between 20 and 40 years with a mean age of 32.6 years ($SD = .84$). Ethnicity of the participants included 75 percent European/Pakeha (New Zealand European); 10 percent New Zealand Māori; nine percent Asian; and six percent others. From these participants, about three quarters (78%) had a university qualification. Table 3.1 presents the demographic information of the participants.

Table 3. 1 Demographic Information of the Participants

Gender	Total	100% (n= 100)
	Female	87 % (n= 87)
	Male	13 % (n= 13)
Age	Mean (Standard Deviation)	32.6 (0.84)
Education	University Degree	78 % (n= 78)
	Certificate	22 % (n=22)
Ethnicity	European/Pakeha	75 % (n=75)
	New Zealand Māori	10 % (n=10)
	Asian	9 % (n= 9)
	Others	6 % (n= 6)

Note. n= number of respondents

Additionally, among the participants, 58 percent worked for private-based centres and 42 percent worked at government-based centres during the time the data were collected. A large proportion of the respondents (76%) had full-time jobs. Approximately 75 percent of the respondents were teachers including relief teachers and student teachers while 25 percent of the respondents had managerial and coordinating positions.

3.2.3 Procedure

Following the ethical approval of the University of Canterbury's Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC), all ECE associations and centres in the Canterbury region were invited to participate in this study. Information sheets (Appendix 3 presents an example of information sheet) and consent letters (Appendix 4 presents an example of consent letter) were sent to all centres (approximately 140) inviting them to fill out the consent forms and contact the researcher (via phone or email) if they wished to

participate in the study. Initial expressions of interest of participation were received from 25 centres and one association. The Father Participation Questionnaire (FPQ) was circulated, as a hard copy and an online version using Qualtrics, to the centres that agreed to participate in this study. Then centres also received the information sheets and consent forms (hard copy and online), and they were requested to distribute these forms to teachers who were interested.

3.2.4 Measure

3.2.4.1 Rational for Developing the Measure

A list of strategic plans to enhance collaborative relationships between ECE centres and parents has been reported in the Te Whāriki (New Zealand ECE Curriculum). Such plans focus on the main goals to working alongside families and prompting parent participation (more details in Chapter 2). While strong partnerships between parent-teachers are important in ECE centres in New Zealand, there is few reported research on how teachers can enhance their approach to working alongside fathers (Farquhar, 2012; Mitchell, Haggerty, et al., 2006). Published research literature on parents mainly seems to have included mothers more than fathers in ECE (Duncan et al., 2012; Hagan et al., 2010). As a result, mothers can be assumed as the main caregiver for children in ECE (Duncan et al., 2006; Mackay, 2003).

Given the importance of exploring parent-teacher partnerships in ECE, fathers' participation in ECE centres is still not as active as mothers'. However, research on fathering has matured in recent years with scholars arguing for the need to engage teachers in this regard and understand their perceptions on fathers in ECE (Hawkins et al., 2002; McAllister et al., 2004; Palm & Fagan, 2008). Hence, it is important to capture and explore father-teacher partnerships aiming at increasing fathers' participation in ECE centres.

The reasons for the lack of fathers' participation in ECE centres seem to be varying and complex with practices to increase fathers' participation being scarce. Additionally, teachers need to be aware of how they could meet fathers' needs and acknowledge their role and expertise as parent to facilitate their participation in ECE. A large number of researchers aptly argued that the best assessment measure should have a solid theoretical ground (McBride & Lutz, 2004) to fit within the existing gap between theory and practice (Garbacz & Sheridan, 2011; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; J. M. White et al., 2011). Several measures have been developed to address this issue including: the Role of the Father Questionnaire (RFQ), the Attitudes toward Father Involvement (ATFI) and the Dakota Father Friendly Assessment (DFFA). These measures will be briefly presented and critiqued in the subsequent sections.

3.2.4.1.1 The Role of the Father Questionnaire (RFQ)

Role of the Father Questionnaire (RFQ) developed by Palkovitz (1984) is a questionnaire consisting of 15 items designed to explore parents' perceptions about fathers' abilities to spend time interacting with their children. J. Fagan et al. (2000) utilised this questionnaire to examine mother's beliefs on how father's roles are important to child development. A modified version of the questionnaire was included in J. M. White et al. (2011) study to indicate teachers' beliefs about various roles that fathers may play in their children raising. This questionnaire has been reported reliable with parents (Palkovitz, 1997), mothers (Palm & Fagan, 2008), and teachers (J. M. White et al., 2011).

While the measure is reported reliable, since it has been designed to tap into mothers' and fathers' parenting abilities and capabilities, the validity of the measure for the current study which was aimed to investigate teachers' perspectives on fathers' participation in the ECE can be questioned. This is because the questionnaire provides little information about

teachers' beliefs on fathers' role in early education centre. Additionally, the limited number of questions may impact a deep understanding of fathers' participation.

3.2.4.1.2 The Attitudes toward Father Involvement (ATFI)

The Attitudes toward Father Involvement (ATFI) is a modified version of the General Attitudes toward Parent Involvement (GATPI) Garinger and McBride (1995). The scale is developed by McBride et al. (2001) to evaluate teachers' perceptions of fathers' participation in an intervention programme in ECE centres. The six items of ATFI focus directly on fathers' involvement, and highlight teachers' attitudes ($\alpha = .76$).

This measure endeavours to capture fathers' involvement by targeting mothers' roles and fathers' own interest. One of the shortcomings of this measure is that it should be utilised with another measure to explore teachers' attitudes within a specific programme. Additionally, the limited number of questions may elicit little information on teachers' perceptions in this regard (McBride et al., 2001).

3.2.4.1.3 The Dakota Father Friendly Assessment (DFFA)

The Dakota Father Friendly Assessment (DFFA) is a 33-items assessment which is to measure ECE staff members' and centres' perceptions regarding fathers' participation in ECE centres (J. M. White et al., 2011). This reliable measure with Coefficient alpha .87 explores father friendliness programmes that value fathers' participation with their children. The measure is a suitable measure to better understand fathers' interests. The DFFA evaluates teachers' attitudes and barriers of fathers' participation but its scope is limited to specific programmes (Head Start programmes) that it is developed for.

The limitation of the DFFA can be considered as it can capture fathers' attitudes evolved in one specific type of centres (i.e., the Head Start programmes in the US). Because attitudes in each centre seem to be formed by a number of factors including rules, roles and behaviours that impacts members' attitudes (J. M. White et al., 2011), the results obtained from the DFFA should be cautiously generalized for other services such as ECE centres.

3.2.4.1.4 Critique of the three reported measures

All the three measures discussed above (i.e., RFQ, ATFI and DFFA) contained factors looking into the influence of fathers' participation in ECE programmes based on the theoretical framework of fathers' role in ECE, derived from Lamb and Hawkins models (Hawkins et al., 2002; Lamb, 2000) (see Chapter 2 for more details). In particular, the factors that focus on the influence of mothers on fathers' participation in ECE, teachers' perspectives that influence fathers' participation in ECE, facilitating items and behavioural components of fathers' personality.

While these questionnaires may seem appropriate for investigating fathers' participation in ECE, they have various shortcomings. For instance, both the RFQ and ATFI, which explored teachers' perceptions, were very brief for the purpose of the current thesis as they were developed to examine the home environment. They were also used with other measures (i.e., General Attitudes Toward Parent Involvement scale (Garinger & McBride, 1995), the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Schumm et al., 1986) and the Fatherwork Scale (developed based on Head Start staff request) (J.M. White et al., 2003), to evaluate teachers' perceptions which may question its independent use and feasibility for the current thesis since a relatively large number of participants from across the country representing the New Zealand population were targeted .

Among the three reported questionnaire, the DFFA seemed the most appropriate measure since it focused on teacher's perceptions. While the DFFA probed teachers' and centre's attitudes, it was not appropriate for the current thesis because it never probed barriers and facilitators of fathers' participation in ECE. In fact, this measure investigated the perceptions and behaviours of ECE teachers and centres to develop a father-friendly environment. This may question the usefulness of such questionnaires for the current thesis since they did not probe the factors that may influence fathers' participation in ECE. For instance, the DFFA focuses mainly on teachers' and centres' behaviour rather than the factors that may hinder or help teachers build better partnerships and relationships with fathers in order to enhance fathers' participation in ECE. Since it can be argued that having a father-friendly environment does not necessarily enhance fathers' participation in ECE, it calls for considering other factors such as facilitators and barriers of fathers' participation.

Additionally, since the three questionnaires mainly focused on teachers' perceptions, it was of great interest to develop a questionnaire which could equally tap into fathers' perceptions. That is, a questionnaire that contained items probing both ECE teachers' and fathers' perceptions of fathers' participation in ECE needed to be developed in order to probe ECE teachers' and fathers' perceptions which may help to identify teachers' biases, facilitators and barriers of fathers' participation in ECE. Such a questionnaire was to provide better comparative data from teachers and fathers. For example, the developed questionnaire needed to have items related to planning activities for fathers, items probing facilitating conditions and teacher trainings to introduce strategies to work with fathers.

Furthermore, the RFQ, ATFI and DFFA measures have been utilised in research investigating father-teacher partnership (by considering teachers' views and ignoring fathers' views) in the United States (US) contexts. Although, there are a lot of similarities in the ways

parent-teacher partnerships are conceptualised and practiced in the US and New Zealand, there are still some contextual differences. Parent-teacher partnership has been highlighted in the New Zealand's ECE curriculum (Te Whāriki) (Ministry of Education, 2017), (see Chapter 2 for more details). Hence, to understand the context of fathers' participation in New Zealand, it seemed necessary to develop a measure suitable for the New Zealand context modelled on those reported in the relevant research field. In other words, a more comprehensive measure seemed necessary for the current thesis; a measure that could provide details about teachers' and fathers' perceptions in the New Zealand context.

To this end, the Father Participation Questionnaire (FPQ) was modelled and developed based on similar questionnaires. The aim was to develop a reliable measure that followed earlier studies to conceptualise meaning of father participation (Green, 2003; Hawkins et al., 2002; Lamb, 2004; McBride et al., 2001; J. M. White et al., 2011). Since the current thesis tried to focus on teachers addressing how to: a) broaden the understanding of fathers' skills; b) explore how fathers may participate in centre's programmes; and c) examine how ECE programmes can enable fathers' participation in both the ECE programme and the educational life of their children, the FPQ was designed to capture a better insight into fathers' participation in ECE centres based on the teachers' main beliefs.

Additionally, the FPQ was developed to investigate factors associated with father in ECE centres in New Zealand (Appendix 6). This measure aimed to assess teachers' beliefs about fathers' participation rather than level of father participation. Additionally, the developed measures included sufficient items (n=69) to capture a wider scope. These 69 items in this measure were drawn from the relevant published research literature and similar questionnaires (mainly from studies reported by (Duncan & Te One, 2012; Hawkins et al., 2002; Lamb, 2000; McBride et al., 2001; Melton, 2005; Mitchell, Tangaere, et al., 2006; J.

M. White et al., 2011). These 69 items tapped into six distinct factors to capture teachers' perceptions, expectations and desire regarding fathers' participation. These factors included teachers' perceptions on their own attitudes and biases as well as their perspectives on maternal support, paternal skills and potential levels of support to fathers' participation. The six factors included: Teachers' Attitudes (TA); Teachers' Biases (TB); Family Factors (FF); Paternal Centred Professionalism PCP); Paternal Competence (PC); and Facilitating Condition (FC).

3.2.5 Pilot Study

To determine the FPQ's reliability and its potential utility as a reliable fathers' participation assessment questionnaire, data were collected from 57 teachers (those who were reported in section 3.2.3) in New Zealand. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for all factors addressed in the FPQ in an effort to make the items as consistent as possible within each factor of the questionnaire. The scale score was also considered to all six factors of the questionnaire, and reverse coding was used where necessary to homogenise the items. Eventually, correlations within and between the factors were calculated. These psychometric properties of the FPQ are reported in the following sections.

3.2.5.1 Participants

Following Educational Research Human Ethics Committee's approval and relevant approvals from the early education associations in New Zealand to conduct the study, standard procedures and confidentiality of participants along with the centre manager permission for entry into the study were followed (more details in section 3.2.3). The pilot study was conducted in New Zealand with ECE teachers (N=57) in Christchurch and Rotorua. Twenty-five ECE centres including those with private owners and those that were

government based were invited to participate in the study. Eight centres (four private and four government based) were randomly selected from those agreed to take part in the study. Teachers from these centres were recruited and participated in the study following their consents. These teachers completed the Father Participation Questionnaire (FPQ) online (through the Qualtrics Website) or a paper based version-the means they were comfortable with.

Participants were teachers, head teachers and centre managers from ECE centres. The participants were aged from 20 to 40 years with a mean age of 36 years and had early centre's working experience ranging from less than one year to more than 10 years with a mean of four years. About 72 percent of the respondents were teachers (e.g., teachers, relief teachers and student teachers) and 28 percent were in management and coordinating positions. Respondent were primarily female (96%). Ethnicity of the participants included 76 percent European/Pakeha (New Zealand European), 11 percent Asian, nine percent New Zealand Māori, and four percent others.

3.2.5.2 The Measure

The questionnaire was administrated in two ways; either online (through the Qualtrics Website) or paper based. It took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Teachers were asked to answer the 69-items excluding demographic items. To facilitate participants' responses to the questionnaire, it was divided into seven sections. Items in each section were based on the content (i.e., they represented the same area); these sections were: 1) background information; 2) teachers' current participation with fathers; 3) teachers' attitudes about fathers' participation; 4) barriers to fathers' participation; 5) facilitators to fathers' participation; 6) teachers' aspirations for further fathers' participation; and 7) end of survey.

All of the items used Likert (1932) five-point rating scale responses that could be quantified. Six embedded items used more qualitative descriptive responses. For example, following a question which asked teachers to indicate how often they meet a father in the centre, they were asked about the level of their satisfaction regarding this situation.

To obtain language clarification and New Zealand context, five of the respondents were randomly asked to provide feedback on the questionnaire's items; these were excluded from the total number of the participants. They reflected different socioeconomic, occupation and ethnicity in the field of ECE. Two of them were teachers in a low income area and one of them was a relief teacher with experience of working in different centres. One centre manager and one male centre's owner who was also a teacher were among the reviewers, too.

The teachers reported that items on the FPQ effectively captured their ideas of working with fathers. They made very few suggestions for additional items and rewording. They said that the questionnaire's sections were understandable and items were mostly straightforward. They also expressed the view that the survey was relevant to the New Zealand ECE context. Based on their responses and feedback, the survey was revised. Ambiguous or difficult wording was clarified for easy understanding, and a few double-questions were modified to follow the rule to ask only one items at a time (Cohen et al., 2011).

The following section presents the questionnaire with the six factors breaking the items in each factor along with a rationale supported by the published research literature, the descriptive statistics and analyses to demonstrate consistency and reliability of the questionnaire along with its construct validity.

3.2.5.2.1 Factor 1: Teachers' Attitudes

Research addressing fathers' participation indicates that teachers are the key people to carry out specific efforts or recommendations (J. Fagan & Stevenson, 2002; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006; Raikes et al., 2005). However, little attention has been paid to the underlying attitudes of teachers (more details in Chapter 2), hence the items for the Teachers' Attitude factor were chosen to capture teacher's attitudes in the context of ECE. McBride et al. (2001) used ATFI Scale (Garinger & McBride, 1995) to collect data on teachers' attitudes for their intervention study. This scale tried to address the teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of the intervention study. Hence, the process examined all the items related to teacher's attitudes as one factor, and the potentials limitations of this are obvious.

The factor tapping into teachers' attitudes in the developed questionnaire consisted of seven items to measure teacher's beliefs toward fathers' participation in ECE centres (see Table 3.2). The items intended to assess how teachers perceive various aspects of fathers' participation including positive feelings towards fathers' role and also skills regarding their children's education and development. Some of these items (e.g., Items 2 and 4 were adopted from DAKOTA (2011) and item 5 was adopted from the RFQ (2000)). The other items were adopted from earlier studies in New Zealand's context which tapped into teacher's everyday work, ECE centres' rules and goals (Mitchell, 2002; Mitchell, Tangaere, et al., 2006).

In the reviewing process, it was discovered that item 2 needed to be reverse scored due to the nature of this item, the quantified value for the reply to this items appeared to neutralise scores obtained for this factor hence reverse scoring was required. The Cronbach's alpha for the items in this factor was calculated and $\alpha=.72$ which is an acceptable index of reliability score (Pallant, 2013; Portney & Watkins, 2009).

Table 3. 2 Items for Teachers' Attitudes (TA)

Items
1. Working alongside fathers is a positive aspect of my work.
2. Parenting is less of a priority for fathers than for mothers.
3. Fathers are teachers too.
4. Fathers are important for their children's education.
5. Fathers play a central role in the child's personality development.
6. Fathers are interested in participating in their children's education.
7. Fathers are more likely to participate in physical activities.

3.2.5.2.2 Factor 2: Teachers' Biases

Research has shown that fathers' participation may increase when teachers are aware of their own feelings of fathers' presence in ECE. Previously, scholars considered teachers' feelings and perceptions as a factor that impacted on their relationships with fathers. In DAKOTA assessment, J. M. White et al. (2011) has uncovered ECE staff bias and found that teachers have preference to build relationships with mothers over fathers. White et al. called this a bias despite the fact that it was a form of perception and attitudes because it tended to prefer a particular situation or person over another. Teachers' bias has been recently recognised as a potential concern for fathers' participation in ECE centres and requires further research.

Teachers' bias in the developed questionnaire initially consisted of 11 items related to teachers' level of knowledge regarding fathers' ability in parenting and their preferences (See Table 3.3). Overall, this factor intended to capture levels of teachers' recognition of the biases that may hinder them to participate fathers in ECE centres. To form this factor, items related to the preference of mothers over fathers were adopted from DAKOTA (2011). Additionally, other items which addressed teachers' knowledge of fathers' parenting skills were added, too. These were taken and modified from the relevant research literature (Farquhar, 2008; Melton, 2005). After reviewing the trend of the answers to these entire

items, nine items needed reverse-scoring in this factor so the answer of one item did not neutralise the answer of the other items. These were items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. After calculating reliability for this factor, it was discovered that removing item one and two could have resulted in an increase in reliability index of this factor from $\alpha=.55$ to $\alpha=.73$. This signified that item 1 and 2 were not measuring the underlying concept consistent with the other items. The problem may be due to a wording of the two items which lead to a limited range of variability and consequently reducing the reliability index. For example, in Item 1 “whose attitudes” was not addressed while in Item 2 the issue of “female-dominated environment”, which seems to be one of the teachers’ biases, was directly asked. Thus these items were clearly weak in measuring the level of participant’s biases and needed to be reworded. Therefore, to increase the overall reliability index for this factor, these two items were reworded.

Table 3. 3 Items for Teachers’ Biases (TB)

Items
1. Attitudes to father participation in the centre’s programmes.
2. The lack of male staff which makes the early childhood centres a female-dominated environment.
3. It is generally easier for early childhood teachers to communicate with mothers.
4. Teachers lack confidence in the fathers’ ability to parenting.
5. Mothers’ attitudes towards father parenting skill.
6. Fathers' time schedules impacts on the communication between you and them.
7. Fathers lack confidence in their own parenting skill.
8. Father's marital satisfaction affects their participation.
9. Fathers are afraid to expose inadequacies.
10. Fathers are afraid of being falsely accused of child abuse.
11. Fathers' participation levels are influenced by cultural/ethnic variables.

3.2.5.2.3 Factor 3: Family Factor

Family characteristics are including maternal, cultural and paternal factors that may relate to greater fathers’ participation in ECE (Raikes et al., 2005; Roggman, 2004). For example, fathers seem to be more likely to participate if mothers encourage them to or fathers

with high self-efficacy might participate better in ECE (McBride & Mills, 1993; Wing-Yin Chow & McBride-Chang, 2003). Previous studies have examined this within the home environment asking related items from both mothers and fathers. In fact, lack of knowledge within ECE centres in this regard is evident. Hence, for the purpose of the current thesis, family factor was addressed via eight items as presented in Table 3.4 to measure family issues that may affect fathers' participation. This factor intended to assess perceptions of teachers in regards to mothers' roles in participating fathers in their children's educational programme.

Reverse-scoring all items in this factor has been performed where necessary with the results of the Cronbach's alpha $\alpha=.66$ proving to be an acceptable reliability index (Pallant, 2013). While reliability score of this factor proved to be acceptable, revisions of the items proved that five out of eight items in this factor were overlapped with Teacher Biases (TB). Thus, this factor embedded with Teacher Biases (TB) to reduce the number of the overall factors.

Table 3. 4 Items for Family Factor (FF)

Items
1. Mothers' attitudes towards father parenting skill.
2. Mothers care more deeply about their children's education.
3. Mothers are naturally more sensitive caregivers than are fathers.
4. Fathers' time schedules impacts on the communication between you and them.
5. Fathers lack confidence in their own parenting skill.
6. Fathers are able to enjoy children more when the children are older and don't require so much care.
7. Father's marital satisfaction affects their participation.
8. Fathers' participation levels are influenced by cultural/ethnic variables.

3.2.5.2.4 Factor 4: Paternal Centred Professionalism

Fathers seem to be more participating in ECE if programmes associate with male figures and components (Palm & Fagan, 2008; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006). It is also expected

that fathers are more likely to participate in ECE programmes if they feel valuable and important for their children's education. Likewise, centre's approaches and programmes could also affect father participation (Raikes et al., 2005; J. M. White et al., 2011). Hence, Factor 4 was an attempt to investigate teachers' efforts to engage fathers in the centre's activities. This factor combined 18 items to assess how teachers behave and act accordingly towards fathers' participation in the centres. The Cronbach's alpha was calculated and indicated reasonable evidence for the factor to be reliable $\alpha=.70$ (Pallant, 2013).

Table 3. 5 Items for Paternal Centred Professionalism (PCP)

Items
1. Fathers are involved in centre's events.
2. Fathers are given responsibilities for events.
3. Fathers organize a group within the centre.
4. Fathers' pictures can be seen in their children's portfolios.
5. Fathers are encouraged to come early and play with their children.
6. Fathers are spoken to during drop-off and pick-up times.
7. Offering activities within a fathers' comfort zone.
8. Planning activities for fathers based on their interests.
9. Inviting fathers to the centre separately.
10. Encouraging fathers to take active roles in centre.
11. Asking fathers for help.
12. The centre's environment reflects fathers' interests.
13. Sending written correspondence to fathers even if they live apart from their children.
14. Inviting fathers to the centre to participate in educational activities.
15. Leaving a space on the enrolment form for the fathers' personal information.
16. Collecting information about fathers, especially non-residential fathers.
17. Advertising special days at convenient times for fathers to come, share ideas and help the centre.
18. Matching up new fathers with current participant fathers.

3.2.5.2.5 Factor 5: Paternal Competence

Evidence from the published studies has indicated that characteristics of fathers themselves may reflect their participation in educational programmes. These characteristics suggest that fathers who have more confidence in their parenting skills may contribute more to the programmes. Likewise, from teacher's perceptions, parenting competence has been

considered as a factor that may reflect parent-teacher relationships in ECE. Hence, it is reasonable to find out teachers' perceptions regarding fathers' parenting skills and how it may impact children's development. Factor 5 contained 14 items to measure paternal competence in ECE centres (see Table 3.6). The items in this factor highlighted a different way in which fathers' may promote their children's development and their roles in the centre.

In this factor, four reverse coded items were required (items 2, 3, 13 and 14). The reliability index of these 14 items in this factor was calculated and proved to be acceptable $\alpha=.72$.

Table 3. 6 Items for Paternal Competence (PC)

Items
1. Fathers regularly come into the centre.
2. Fathers only come for events.
3. Fathers only drop-off and pick-up their children.
4. Fathers are involved in events.
5. Fathers ask questions about their children.
6. Fathers appear interested in participating in their children's education.
7. Fathers have the confidence to ask questions about their child.
8. Fathers have a different parenting style that develops children's skills.
9. Fathers' presence in the centre develops girls' risk taking skills.
10. Children enjoy spending time with their fathers in the centre.
11. Boys are more likely to spend time with their fathers in the centre.
12. Fathers lack confidence in their own parenting skill.
13. Fathers are afraid to expose inadequacies.
14. Fathers are afraid of being falsely accused of child abuse.

3.2.5.2.6 Factor 6: Facilitating Conditions

Facilitating conditions are usually considered as an indicator of teachers' aspirations to involve fathers in activities. Facilitating fathers' participation in ECE centres requires some efforts to be done by the teachers and centre's programmes. These efforts may lead to some conditions that may enable teachers to know males' figures and enhance their participation in the centres. Factor 6 with 14 items (as presented in Table 3.7) is related to

conditions within the centres which may enhance fathers' participation in ECE. This factor was an attempt to provide insights into the level of support provided by the centre's programme to assist teachers in their efforts to facilitate fathers' participation, how the existence of specific programme reaches out or supports fathers, and facilitation of specific behaviours intends to support and encourage fathers' participation. The Cronbach's alpha for this factor which required no reverse scoring was $\alpha = .76$.

Table 3. 7 Items for Facilitating Conditions (FC)

Items
1. Different choice of words is required when interacting with fathers.
2. Providing adequate training for working with fathers.
3. Increasing the presence of male staff in the centre.
4. Increasing the presence of male students on placement in the centre.
5. Male teacher demonstrating to fathers how to interact and behave with children.
6. Understanding that different approaches are necessary in different communities.
7. Being aware of cultural differences with different groups of fathers.
8. Getting into schedule with fathers.
9. Training female teachers and staff to encourage male participation in the centre.
10. Providing professional development and support services related to teacher-father relationship for teachers.
11. Providing flexible programmes for fathers.
12. Creating father-friendly environment for fathers in the centre.
13. Holding parent-teacher meeting especially for fathers.
14. Conducting a survey of fathers' ideas and interest.

3.2.5.2.7 The Embedded Items

Teachers identified the importance of their communication and relationships with fathers (Mitchell, Haggerty, et al., 2006). However, there are still various perceptions about the number and length of teachers' communication with fathers. Additionally, father-teacher communication may be influenced by ECE programmes and also the families' culture. To have more descriptive responses on teachers' perceptions about their communication with fathers, six embedded questions were added to the questionnaire.

These six items tried to capture teachers' feelings on how often they communicate with fathers and also how often fathers visit the centre (see Table 3.8). Three questions targeted in providing a tally to represent the frequency of the times fathers come to the centre and their interactions with teachers. The responses scale defined on a 4- point option) "None" = 1, "1-2 fathers/times" = 2, "3-5 fathers/times" = 3 and "more than 5 fathers/times" = 4). Each of them was followed by a question on teachers' level of satisfaction on the situation. These questions were initially ranked on a 7-piont Likert scale ranged from "Very dissatisfied" =1 to "Very Satisfied" =7. However, these were reduced to three possible respondents due to the feedback received on the questionnaire after piloting.

Table 3. 8 Example of the Six Embedded Questions

Think of a typical week. About how many times do you see fathers/male caregivers?	<input type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> 1-2 times <input type="radio"/> 3-5 times <input type="radio"/> More than 5 times
How satisfied are you with above situation?	<input type="radio"/> Very dissatisfied <input type="radio"/> Dissatisfied <input type="radio"/> Somewhat dissatisfied <input type="radio"/> Natural <input type="radio"/> Somewhat satisfied <input type="radio"/> Satisfied <input type="radio"/> Vary satisfied

3.2.6 Modification

To determine the internal consistency and potential utility of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha and correlation statistics were calculated (Portney & Watkins, 2009). To evaluate the extent to which the items in each factor measured a single construct, Cronbach's alpha was calculated (this has been reported earlier in the chapter for each factor). For the overall 63-item scale, an alpha coefficient was calculated and proved to meet an acceptable index $\alpha=.78$ (Pallant, 2013).

As mentioned earlier, Cronbach's alpha for each factor fell within the acceptable range of general reliability analysis except for Teacher Biases (TB, $\alpha = .55$). This was probably due to the wording of two items in that factor. Thus, rewording those items may have led to an increase in the reliability score. On the other hand, more than half of the items in the Family Factor (FF, $\alpha = .66$) were overlapped with Teacher Biases (TB). This questioned the existence of two separated factors; hence, the three non-overlapped items of the Family Factor (FF) were combined with the items in the Teacher Biases (TB) factor. This resulted in an increase of alpha coefficients to $\alpha = .66$ for the TB factor.

As a result, five factors including Teachers' Attitudes (TA), Teachers' Biases (TB), Paternal Centred Professionalism (PCP), Paternal Competence (PC) and Facilitating Conditions (FC) were remained in the FPQ. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha coefficient and scale-score for final factors are presented in Table 3.9.

Table 3. 9 Mean scores, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alpha and Scale-Score for the Five Final Factors

	N of Items	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha	Percentage of participants	Scale-Score Min.	Scale-Score Max.
TA	7	30.45	2.59	.72	100	25	34
TB	14	44.34	5.44	.66	82.4	30	53
PCP	18	66.26	6.22	.70	78.9	55	83
PC	14	45.19	4.36	.71	89.4	33	53
FC	14	50.68	5.86	.76	82.4	40	62

Note: TA: teachers' attitudes, TB: teachers' biases, FF: family factor, PCP: paternal centres professionalism, PC: paternal competence, FC: facilitating conditions, SD: standard deviations

To assess the relationships among the factors, correlation within and between the factors were calculated. Each of the six factors was moderately correlated within their items. Relationships were also found between factors as predicted (see Table 3.10). Two factors, the Teacher Biases and the Family Factor were related strongly. This correlation provided

evidence to support the combination of the two factors which could fall under the Family Factor with Teacher Biases. Overall, this led to have five factors in the final questionnaire. Correlations among these five factors are presented in Table 3.11.

Table 3. 10 Correlation between Scale-Scores of Six Preliminary Factors

	TA	TB	FF	PCP	PC	FC
TA	1					
TB	.230	1				
FF	.469**	.808**	1			
PCP	.232	-.117	-.161	1		
PC	.624**	.487**	.613**	.220	1	
FC	.098	-.468**	-.481**	.580**	-.115	1

Note: TA: teachers' attitudes, TB: teachers' biases, FF: family factor, PCP: paternal centres professionalism, PC: paternal competence, FC: facilitating conditions

Table 3. 11 Correlation between Scale-Scores of the Five Final Factors

	TA	TB	PCP	PC	FC
TA	1				
TB	.374**	1			
PCP	.232	-.124	1		
PC	.624**	.588**	.220	1	
FC	.098	-.443**	.580**	-.115	1

Note: TA: teachers' attitudes, TB: teachers' biases, FF: family factor, PCP: paternal centres professionalism, PC: paternal competence, FC: facilitating conditions

In short, this section highlighted the development of the measure developed for the purpose of the study to investigate fathers' participation based on teachers' perceptions and behaviours. The Father Participation Questionnaire (FPQ) developed for the purpose of this research demonstrated a reliable measure to assess teachers' perceptions and capture facilitators and barriers of father-teacher relationships. The next section presents the results of the study.

3.3 Results

The current study aimed to investigate teachers' attitudes and beliefs of fathers' participation in ECE. The data from the Father Participation Questionnaire were statistically analysed. First the descriptive statistics were computed to determine the mean and standard deviations amongst all factors' scale scores and items to examine distribution of the data. Then, an independent sample t-test and one way ANOVA were calculated to ascertain whether a difference existed among the participants in various groups (e.g., teachers vs. managers, etc.). Finally, cross tabulation were performed to assess the levels of participants' satisfactory by combination of the embedded questions in the questionnaire. These will be explained in the subsequent sections.

3.3.1 Descriptive Statistics and Comparisons across Factors

Table 3.12 presents the mean and the range of the obtained scores for each factor. Overall, the mean values demonstrated the highest value for teachers' attitudes indicating that respondents were mostly positive for this factor. The results also demonstrated the lowest value for teachers' biases indicating that fathers' participation is highly valued in ECE. (Scores above 3 is considered positive and below 3 negative).

Table 3. 12 Descriptive Statistics of Factors' Scale Scores

Factors	N of Items (Number of the respondents=100)	Mean	Range
Teachers' Attitude	7	4.37	25-35
Teachers' Biases	14	3.15	30-59
Parental Cantered Professionalism	18	3.67	51-85
Parental Competence	14	3.48	30-61
Facilitating Conditions	14	3.63	40-64

Note. The ranges presented in the table indicate the minimum and maximum range not the range of data page

3.3.1.1 Teachers' Attitudes

When teachers were asked to report their perceptions towards fathers, almost all teachers agreed that fathers are important in their children's education. Fathers got the second rank for their role as an educator in their children's behaviour development. Similarly, an equal proportion of teachers had positive attitudes to communicate and work alongside male figures. Additionally, teachers believed that fathers have the same parenting priorities as mothers do. Table 3.13 presents the data for Teachers' attitudes.

Table 3. 13 Results for the Teachers' Attitudes with Mean and Standard Deviations

Teachers' Attitudes		M	SD	% Reporting Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Reporting Neutral	% Reporting Strongly Agree or Agree
1	Fathers are important for their children's education.	4.78	.44	2	1	97
2	Fathers are teaches too.	4.69	.50	2	4	94
3	Fathers play a central role in the child's personality development.	4.69	.61	2	6	92
4	Working alongside fathers is a positive aspect of my work.	4.42	.68	2	9	89
5	Fathers are interested in participating in their children's education.	4.15	.70	2	16	82
R6	Parenting is less of a priority for fathers than for mothers.	4.07	.95	75	15	10
7	Fathers are more likely to participate in physical activities.	3.78	.89	11	22	64

R: Reverse Item

Note. Minimum=0 and maximum=5

3.3.1.2 Teachers' Biases

When asked about the biases of fathers' participation, the scores were slightly lower than the results obtained from other factors in the questionnaire. Respondents appear to be

not aware of their own biases; and they may not clearly have understood the items. They seemed to have biases regarding centres, mothers and fathers' issues. The majority of the teachers disagreed about the influence of mothers' attitudes and centres' programmes on fathers' participation. Table 3.14 presents the mean value and standard deviation of the responses in this factor.

Table 3. 14 Results for the Teachers' Biases with Mean and Standard Deviation

Teachers' Biases		M	SD	% Reporting Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Reporting Neutral	% Reporting Strongly Agree or Agree
R1	Fathers are able to enjoy children more when the children are older.	3.94	.96	71	17	12
R2	Mothers are naturally more sensitive caregivers than are fathers.	3.59	.98	18	25	57
3	The lack of male staff in ECE centres hinders fathers' participation.	3.56	.24	21	14	65
R4	Teachers lack confidence in the fathers' ability to parenting.	3.55	.14	48	36	16
R5	Mothers' attitudes towards fathers' parenting skill.	3.43	.05	49	26	25
R6	Fathers are afraid to expose inadequacies.	3.33	.87	42	40	18
R7	It is generally easier for ECE teachers to communicate with mothers than fathers.	3.28	.22	48	21	31
R8	Fathers lack confidence in their own parenting skill.	3.27	.02	43	33	24
R9	Fathers are afraid of being falsely accused of child abuse in ECE centre.	3.20	.04	41	29	30
R10	Father's marital satisfaction affects their participation in ECE centre.	3.15	.96	28	53	19

(continued)

R11	Fathers' participation levels are influenced by cultural / ethnic variables.	2.62	.95	18	33	49
R12	Fathers' time schedules impacts on the communication between you and them.	2.58	.16	28	16	56
13	Centre's attitudes to father participation.	2.34	.09	59	24	17
R14	Mothers care more deeply about their children's education than fathers.	2.32	.01	14	30	56

R: Reverse Item

Note. Minimum=0 and maximum=5

3.3.1.3 Paternal Centred Professionalism

When asked to report professional attempts of the centre to increase father's presence, approximately all teachers reported that fathers are spoken to in the centres. The second popular item was 'asking help from fathers', followed by 'including fathers in the enrolment forms to participate in the centres' events'. However, only a minor group of the respondents expressed that fathers have been given responsibilities for events in their centres. The majority of the teachers agreed that they should ask and encourage fathers to come to the centre to help. Most teachers reported that fathers' picture can be seen in their children's portfolios while only a minor group reported that they have organised groups for fathers in their centres. Participants strongly agreed to invite fathers for educational programmes; however, they were reluctant to invite fathers to the centres separately. Respondents also accepted that centres' need to reflect fathers' interests and needs. Collecting information about fathers even if they live apart from their children was another aspect that teachers seemed to unanimously agree upon. Table 3.15 presents the results for the Parental centred professionalism with mean and standard deviation.

Table 3. 15 Results for the Parental Centred Professionalism with Mean and Standard Deviation

Paternal Centred Professionalism		M	SD	% Reporting Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Reporting Neutral	% Reporting Strongly Agree or Agree
1	Fathers are spoken to during drop-off and pick-up times.	4.57	.67	2	5	93
2	Asking fathers for help.	4.30	.50	4	5	91
3	Leaving a space on the enrolment form for the fathers' personal information.	4.13	.50	8	21	71
4	Encouraging fathers to take active roles in ECE centre.	4.08	.64	5	12	83
5	Advertising special days at convenient times for fathers to come, share ideas and help the centre.	4.02	.59	4	15	81
6	Sending written correspondence to fathers even if they live apart from their children.	3.98	.65	7	19	74
7	Inviting fathers to the centre to participate in educational activities.	3.85	.77	11	6	83
8	Collecting information about fathers, especially non-residential fathers.	3.84	.63	6	19	75
9	Fathers are involved in centre's events.	3.73	.87	13	17	70
10	Planning activities for fathers based on their interests.	3.61	.81	13	24	63
11	Fathers' pictures can be seen in their children's portfolios.	3.59	1.11	21	12	67
12	The centre's environment reflects fathers' interests.	3.57	.88	13	33	54
13	Offering activities within a fathers' comfort zone.	3.54	.86	15	26	59
14	Fathers are encouraged to come early and play with their children.	3.47	1.14	23	20	57

(continued)

15	Matching up new fathers with current participant fathers.	3.44	.82	15	39	46
16	Inviting fathers to the centre separately.	3.02	.96	32	34	34
17	Fathers are given responsibilities for events.	2.94	1.08	36	28	36
18	Fathers organize a group within the centre.	2.27	1.03	61	26	13

Note. Minimum=0 and maximum=5

3.3.1.4 Paternal Competence

When teachers were asked to rank paternal competence factors in their centres, the respondents mostly agreed that fathers come to the centre and participate in events. They believed that fathers may involve in the centres' events, too. Mostly participants agreed that children enjoy spending time with their fathers, and fathers have a different parenting style. Moreover, fathers usually ask about their children's daily routines, and they are interested in participating in their children's education. Interestingly, there was similarity in the ratios of teachers that reported positive and negative responses when asked about fathers' coming only for drop-off and pick-up. Additionally, when asked about the relationship between fathers' presence and their girl's risk taking skills, mainly teachers had neither positive nor negative responses. Table 3.16 presents the results for Parental Competence with mean and standard deviations.

Table 3. 16 Results for Paternal Competence with Mean and Standard Deviations

Paternal Competence		M	SD	% Reporting Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Reporting Neutral	% Reporting Strongly Agree or Agree
1	Fathers have a different parenting style than mothers that develops children's skills.	4.49	.77	4	9	87
2	Fathers ask questions about their children.	4.11	.81	6	7	87
3	Fathers appear interested in participating in their children's education.	4.03	.86	7	14	79
R4	Fathers only come to centre for events.	3.96	.01	68	14	18
5	Fathers regularly come into the centre.	3.91	.03	15	9	76
6	Fathers have the confidence to ask questions about their child.	3.74	.90	13	19	68
7	Children enjoy spending time with their fathers in the centre.	3.52	.58	4	4	92
8	Fathers' presence in the centre develops girls' risk taking skills.	3.46	.80	8	45	47
9	Boys are more likely to spend time with their fathers in the centre.	3.04	.04	29	44	27
R10	Fathers only drop-off and pick-up their children.	3.02	.17	43	18	39

R: Reverse Item

Note. Minimum=0 and maximum=5

3.3.1.5 Facilitating Conditions

One of the results from the data was that teachers mainly disagreed to use different choice of words when talking to fathers in spite of agreeing that different communities need different approaches. Overall, participants had mainly positive perceptions to different

approaches that may help fathers to involve more in the centre environment. Table 3.17 presents the results for facilitating conditions with mean and standard deviations.

Table 3. 17 Results for Facilitating Conditions with Mean and Standard Deviations

Facilitating Conditions		M	SD	% Reporting Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Reporting Neutral	% Reporting Strongly Agree or Agree
1	Being aware of cultural differences with different groups of fathers.	4.25	.56	5	8	88
2	Understanding that different approaches are necessary in different communities.	4.18	.62	6	9	85
3	Creating father-friendly environment for fathers in the centre.	4.16	.55	1	11	88
4	Conducting a survey of fathers' ideas and interest.	3.90	.72	8	21	71
5	Providing professional development and support services related to teacher-father relationship for teachers.	3.82	.70	23	35	42
6	Providing flexible programmes for fathers.	3.80	.73	7	26	67
7	Training female teachers and staff to encourage fathers' participation in the centre.	3.67	.87	11	33	56
8	Increasing the presence of male staff in the centre.	3.65	.01	14	29	57
9	Increasing the presence of male students on placement in the centre.	3.58	.97	15	28	57
10	Getting into schedule with fathers.	3.43	.85	14	45	41
11	Holding parent-teacher meeting especially for fathers.	3.34	.82	18	40	42
12	Providing adequate training for working with fathers.	3.24	.87	23	35	40
13	Male teacher demonstrating to fathers how to interact and behave with children.	3.15	.96	28	36	36
14	Different choice of words is required when interacting with fathers.	2.46	.98	56	23	21

Note. Minimum=0 and maximum=5

3.3.2 Independent Sample t-test

Further analyses were completed to ascertain whether a difference exists between the scores obtained by participants in each of the six factors of the questionnaire considering their demographic variables. Data were analysed by seven groups including gender; age; education; position; experience; type of centre; and working hours.

The results of an independent sample t-test can be found in Table 3.18 for each group. For gender, male (N=13, M= 31.23, SD= 2.48) and female (N= 87, M= 30.51, SD= 2.57) showed no significant differences in factors' scores. Additionally, no differences were evident in factors' scores among centre managers (N= 36, M= 30.97, SD= 2.38) and teachers (N= 60, M= 30.38, SD= 2.65). Results also showed no differences in factors' scores among teachers' education, that is those with a certificate and those with a university qualification; and participants' experience (i.e., those with less than 5 years and those with more than 5 years). Likewise, there were no differences in factors' scores among the participants' place of work (i.e., those who work in private centres and those who work in government based centres), and also their working hours.

Table 3. 18 Results of an Independent Sample t-test

		Factors									
Groups		Teacher's attitudes		Teachers' biases		Paternal centred professionalism		Paternal competence		Facilitating conditions	
		M (SD)	Sig. t- test	M (SD)	Sig. t- test	M (SD)	Sig. t- test	M (SD)	Sig. t- test	M (SD)	Sig. t- test
Gender	Male	31.23 (2.48)	.54	42.91 (7.39)	.10	63.00 (5.11)	.27	46.82 (7.62)	.16	52.23 (5.23)	.23
	Female	30.51 (2.57)		44.38 (5.62)		66.66 (6.08)		48.99 (4.99)		50.56 (6.04)	
Position	Centre manager	30.97 (2.38)	.49	44.65 (5.83)	.78	66.72 (6.71)	.42	49.56 (6.00)	.58	50.52 (6.28)	.64
	Teacher	30.38 (2.65)		43.93 (5.90)		65.68 (5.61)		48.19 (4.94)		51.00 (5.76)	
Education	Certificate	3.57 (2.50)	.89	45.21 (5.02)	.23	65.13 (4.51)	.22	49.37 (4.09)	.06	50.24 (4.96)	.15
	University degree	30.59 (2.61)		43.91 (6.12)		66.30 (6.43)		48.62 (5.70)		50.95 (6.22)	
Experience	< 5 years	30.54 (2.73)	.80	44.45 (6.44)	.38	66.62 (5.12)	.59	49.13 (4.85)	.67	51.14 (6.02)	.93
	> 5 years	30.63 (2.51)		44.10 (5.68)		65.91 (6.40)		48.57 (5.59)		50.57 (5.94)	
Place of work	Private centre	30.52 (2.61)	.76	44.29 (5.81)	.64	65.18 (6.00)	.24	48.22 (5.58)	.35	50.35 (5.87)	.88
	Government based centre	30.79 (2.48)		43.86 (6.22)		67.81 (4.77)		49.83 (4.64)		51.75 (5.83)	

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to explore the impact of the participants' age on the factors' scores. Participants were divided into three age groups including; under 30 years (M= 28.76, SD= 3.74); between 31 and 40 years (M= 29.23, SD=3.00); and above 40 (M= 29.00, SD=2.73). There were no significant differences evident at the $p < .5$ level in factors' scores for the three age groups.

3.3.3 The Embedded Items

Cross tabulation analysis was utilized to interpret the data from the four embedded Items in the measure (see Tables 3.19 and 3.20).

When asked teachers about the tallying of fathers who were seen and satisfaction, 87% percent of teachers were satisfied about seeing more than 5 fathers in a week.

Table 3. 19 Results of Cross-tabulation Analysis

Tallying of father	Participants' satisfaction		
	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied
1-2 fathers	37.5	45.0	17.5
3-5 fathers	29.4	23.5	47.1
More than 5 fathers	4.9	7.3	87.8

When asked about the frequency of communication to fathers (father-teacher communication) and satisfaction, mainly teachers reported their satisfaction on 5 times or more communication in a week.

Table 3. 20 Results of Cross-tabulation Analysis

Frequency of communication	Participants' satisfaction		
	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied
1-2 times	23.1	46.2	30.8
3-5 times	26.3	26.3	47.4
More than 5 times	13.6	18.2	68.2

These results demonstrated that teachers are more satisfied when they are able to meet and communicate with fathers. As shown in Table 3.19 and 3.20, a higher rate of satisfaction was observed when there was increased frequency of communication with fathers, due to their higher visiting rates.

3.4 Discussion

The current study investigated teachers' expectations and perceptions of fathers' participation in ECE. The data were collected utilizing the questionnaire developed for the purpose of the study named the Father Participation Questionnaire (FPQ) which was modelled on the questionnaires published in various research papers.

The results suggested that teachers have positive attitudes toward fathers' participation in ECE. Teachers' generally produced high scores (the mean value of 4.37) in factor related to their attitudes. For example teachers are strongly positive about fathers' role and see their importance in their children's education. This result indicated that New Zealand ECE teachers recognised the importance of fathers in ECE; in particular fathers are very important in playing with their children which helps children's development. The majority of ECE teachers (89%) also believed that working alongside fathers is a positive aspect of their work. This reflects that ECE teachers are interested in increasing fathers' participation in ECE programmes. A majority of ECE teachers (78%) in this study had university levels of qualification; they valued fathers' presence in their children's education and wanted to work alongside fathers to empower children's development. The New Zealand ECE curriculum (Te Whāriki) has focused on active parent collaboration as a strong point; hence teachers' perceptions reflected in this study are matched with the aim of the curriculum. This is supported by the results found in a number of other studies such as those reported by (Green,

2003; McBride et al., 2001; J. M. White et al., 2011). These studies provided similar evidence of the positive and importance of teachers' attitudes toward fathers' participation in ECE programmes.

However, teachers generally produced the lower score (the mean value of 3.15) for factor related to their biases. As mentioned earlier, the values above three indicated a positive attitude in this study. Therefore it can be argued that ECE teachers are marginally positive in this regard as well. However, the data need to interpret cautiously. Teachers identified a lack of male teachers in ECE centres, and accepted that ECE centres are female-dominated. However, they did not believe that mother's attitudes and better marriage satisfaction can be associated with higher levels of fathers' participation in ECE centres. In fact, it has been reported that marital relationship may influence fathers' participation in their children's education (Kwok et al., 2013). This contradictory finding could be interpreted in three ways. First, it may show that teachers in this study are unaware of their biases (i.e., preferences of mothers over fathers). In other words, as most of the participating teachers were female (along with female dominated area of ECE), there might be a tendency of not seeing mothers' role as gatekeeper in paternal participation (McBride et al., 2017; McBride et al., 2001). Second, it may show that ECE teachers are not biased, and believe that mothers do not have an influence on fathers' participation. Teachers may believe that fathers are competent and skilled parents, and also they believe that fathers do not hesitate to come to ECE staff and ask about their children's daily activities. Thirdly, this study used a questionnaire to ask teachers' perspectives so this result might be due to misunderstanding the questions and terminologies used in it. However, since this result is relatively new in the field, future studies should examine the underlying reasons by using more narrative studies. Additionally, further

investigations considering gender stereotype and gender role in ECE would be useful as well (more details in Chapter 6).

Additionally, while some ECE teachers (57%) reported that mothers are naturally more sensitive care givers than fathers are, this should not be interpreted as teachers were questioning fathers' parenting skills. The result revealed that ECE teachers (75%) recognised mothers and fathers equal in their parenting priorities. In other words, the results showed that teachers do not lack confidence in fathers' parenting skills. Further research is required to address this contradictory finding in ECE teachers' perceptions.

The findings indicated that ECE teachers are mostly aware of considering paternal professionalism practice and competence in ECE centres. Teachers reported the mean value of 3.68 and 3.47 for these factors. They expressed that setting up activities based on fathers' interests and within their comfort zone are necessary to increase fathers' participation in ECE. Asking fathers for help, inviting fathers to participate in educational activities and encouraging fathers to take active roles in ECE centres was mainly accepted as part of teachers' professionalism by ECE teachers. Additionally, respondent seemed to be aware of how to consider fathers' participation in ECE centres including those fathers that do not live in the children's home (non-residential fathers). About 75% of ECE teachers were agreed to sending written correspondence to fathers even if they live apart from their children. When ECE teachers were asked for suggestions on paternal practices in ECE, items such as collecting information about fathers, leaving space for fathers in the enrolment form and fathers' pictures in children's profiles were reported.

When paternal competence was examined, mostly ECE teachers (87%) reported that fathers (compared to mothers) have a different parenting style. The majority of ECE teachers

(92%) believed that children enjoy of spending time with their fathers in ECE centres.

Considering the effect of fathers on boys or girls, about half of the respondents believed that fathers' participation has a positive impact on girls' risk taking skills. Therefore, these findings may interpret that there is no difference between girls and boys willing to play with their fathers in ECE centres. However, this finding should be cautiously interpreted since the questionnaires used in this study did not ask the same question of boy's risk taking and did not target differentiating the impact of fathers' participation on boys or girls.

Examining the facilitating condition with the mean value of 3.63 shows that increasing presence of male staff in ECE centres was considered as fathers' participation facilitators by most ECE teachers. These results are similar with previous studies suggesting gender balance in ECE as a facilitator of fathers' participation in ECE (Duncan & Te One, 2014; Farquhar, 2008; McBride et al., 2001). Creating father-friendly environment that reflects fathers' interests and needs is another considering point which was reported by ECE teachers (88%). Additionally, ECE teachers mostly (88%) believed that being aware of different cultures could improve fathers' participation in ECE. However, the importance of language was mentioned only by some of the teachers (21%) which may call for further investigations on the need for communication with fathers in a different way (e.g., choice of vocabulary items). The findings were in contrast with the studies stating that choosing a father figure that reflects father's interests and needs may help fathers feel more comfortable in ECE centres (Raikes & Bellotti, 2006; J. M. White et al., 2011). Such a differing idea may call for professional developments to increase ECE teachers' awareness to enhance better communication skills with fathers. Likewise, ECE teachers (about 50%) seem to be relatively positive about such professional development being embedded in their trainings;

the programmes that may help teachers to improve their knowledge regarding fathers' participation in ECE centre.

Previous studies on barriers suggest that fathers' time schedule is one of the barrier for fathers' participation (Freeman, Newland, & Coyl, 2008; Jacobs & Kelley, 2006; Turbiville & Marquis, 2001). In the current study, ECE teachers thought in a similar vein and believed that fathers' work hours may influence their participation in ECE centres. Furthermore, ECE teachers who communicated with fathers seemed to be very satisfied with their jobs. They reported higher level of satisfaction when seeing and communicating with more fathers.

Furthermore, this study collected data through a questionnaire to elicit teachers' perspectives. Although, a descriptive survey design is one of the useful ways to gather information from a large group (i.e., New Zealand ECE teachers), there is a lack of an in-depth understanding of the gathered information (i.e., teachers' perspectives). For example, the participating teachers might be those teachers who are interested in paternal participation and their answers might bias the data. Hence the data should be treated with caution. Further studies should use qualitative methods to allow a detailed exploration of topic (i.e., teachers' perspectives).

Taken together, the results are consistent with other research in the field arguing for establishing a father-friendly environment in ECE centres (T. Kahn, 2006; McBride et al., 2001; J. M. White et al., 2011) and considering fathers' needs and interest in developing ECE programmes. Overall, the findings reported in this chapter are consistent with those of other studies in highlighting that ECE teacher' perceptions towards fathers in ECE may affect the level of fathers' participation (Levine, 1993; McAllister et al., 2004; J. M. White et al., 2011).

Hence, the findings reported in this chapter are encouraging for ECE teachers and programme developers to identify ways to encourage and facilitate fathers' participation in ECE.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the descriptive study on the fathers' participation from 100 ECE teachers in New Zealand's ECE centres. The study adds to the pool of the published literature on fathers' participation in ECE. The findings demonstrated that the majority of teachers place a high value on fathers' roles in their children's personality development and education. Further, ECE teachers' awareness of the value of the welcoming environment for fathers as parent, assist in facilitating fathers' participation in the ECE centres.

The current study focused on teachers' perceptions regarding fathers' participation in ECE; as well as a variety of aspects that may hinder or facilitate such partnerships. However, a range of different perceptions and aspects may be considered by fathers that are not captured by the ECE teachers' survey. Chapter 4 presents the investigation of fathers' perceptions regarding their participation with their children's ECE centre.

Chapter 4

Study 2: Fathers' Participation in Early Childhood Education

Centres: Fathers' Perceptions

4.1 Introduction

International research into fathers' participation in their children's ECE education have proved positive outcomes for both children and fathers (Hawkins et al., 2002; Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000). Fathers' participation in their children's early education is believed to be either home-based or centre-based. Research on fathers' participation in the home-based module is more extensive than those in the centre-based module (Downer et al., 2008; Lamb, 2000) (see Chapter 2 for a review) highlighting that little is known about the participation of fathers in the ECE programmes.

Studies on fathers' participation have documented some barriers regarding fathers' roles in children's learning and development (Lamb, 2004). It is argued that the level of fathers' participation is influenced by fathers' work hours and personal fear (Anderson, Kohler, & Letiecq, 2002; Horn, 2004), lack of male teachers in ECE centres (Nelson, B. (2011). Fathers would be more involved if there were more male staff. Retrieved from <http://www.mnfathers.org/EarlyChildhoodSectorAnalysis.pdf> (Farquhar et al., 2006) and lack of teachers' experience in working with fathers (Downer et al., 2008; McBride & Lutz, 2004). Additionally, results of Study 1 of the current thesis (Chapter 3) identified that teachers have mixed beliefs about fathers. On one hand, teachers believed that fathers are capable caregivers and care for their children's care and education in ECE; on the other hand, they recognised mothers as more caring and involved in their young children's education.

Furthermore, teachers reported fathers' participation in ECE centres can be facilitated by fathers' motivation and focused activities revolving around their interests.

Despite the increasing attention to barriers and facilitator of fathers' participation in ECE programmes as described above (also more details can be found in Chapter 2), fathers' perceptions in this regard have been less studied than those of teachers'. Browsing the published research literature on paternal participation, teachers' perceptions have been considered more than those of fathers'. In other words, little information has been provided on fathers' own perceptions regarding their participation in their children's ECE centres.

The study presented in this chapter explored barriers and facilitators of fathers' participation in Early Childhood Education (ECE) reported by fathers. The study examined the question:

- 1) What do fathers consider as barriers and facilitators for their participation in ECE centres?

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Study Design

This study reports data gathered via the questionnaire on the fathers' participation in ECE centres, completed by fathers; the questionnaire was developed by the researcher to initially tap into the teachers' perceptions (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.1) which was modified to serve this study (see 4.2.4 Measures)

4.2.2 Participants

Approval to conduct the present study was obtained from the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC) of the University of Canterbury (Appendix 2).

Participants were fathers with children attending ECE centres in New Zealand. Participating ECE centres were those reported in Study 1 (Chapter 3 of this thesis). All centres (approximately 30) were approached via email and the research aims were introduced. All fathers were invited, and initial expressions of interest to participate in the study were received from 11 centres.

All participants were provided with information sheets about the project (Appendix 3); the Father Participation Questionnaire (FPQ) (hard copy and online); and consent form (Appendix 4). Fifty-three fathers completed the questionnaire, with the three of them being incomplete. The incomplete questionnaires were excluded which left 50 participants for the current study. These were 50 fathers aged between 20 and 40 years with a mean age 32.8 and standard deviation .53. Ethnicity of the participants included 54 percent European/Pakeha (New Zealand European), four percent New Zealand Māori, 18 percent Asian, and 24 percent other. From these participants, three quarters (66%) had university degrees. Table 4.1 presents the demographic information of the participants.

Table 4. 1 Demographic Information of the Participants

Age	M (SD)	32.8 (0.53)
Education	University Degree	66% (n= 33)
	College certificate/ High School Diploma	34% (n=17)
Ethnicity	European/Pakeha	54% (n=27)
	New Zealand Māori	4% (n=2)
	Asian	18 % (n= 9)
	Other	24% (n= 12)

Note. n= number of respondents

Additionally, among the participants, 84% were married and 82% had full-time jobs during the time when the data were collected. A large proportion of the respondents (85.4%) shared caring responsibilities with their partner, with approximately 60% of the respondents' children attending ECE centres for 4-5 days.

4.2.3 Procedure

Following the ethical approval by the University of Canterbury ERHEC (see Appendix 2), centres in the Christchurch region were invited to participate in this study. Information sheets and consent letters (see Appendices 3 and 4) were sent to all centres (approximately 30) inviting them to fill out the consent forms and contact the researcher (via phone or email) if they wished to participate in the study. Further details regarding the anonymity of the research, information and consent forms were provided in chapter 3, section 3.2.2. Initial expressions of interest to participate in the study were received from 11 centres. Then centres received the Father Participation Questionnaire, information sheets and consent forms (hard copy and online) requesting the centres to circulate them to the fathers who were interested in participating in the study.

4.2.4 Measures

The Father Participation Questionnaire (FPQ) (as detailed in Chapter 3) which was initially developed to investigate teachers' perceptions on fathers' participation in ECE centres was modified to collect perceptions of fathers in this regard. The modified questionnaire was piloted on three fathers who discussed the questions with the researchers and their opinions were sought. Following the pilot study, adaptations were made by excluding 17 questions from the main questionnaire. These were questions which made fathers feel neglected and uncomfortable. The shortened questionnaire consisted of 54 questions. Since some questions were deleted from the FPQ, the pilot data were modified (i.e., excluding those 17 questions from the FPQ) (see Appendix 7).

The FPQ (fathers' version) comprised five factors with the total questions of 54 in a Likert scale (five-point rating scale). These factors are summarized as: 1) Fathers' attitudes; 2) Fathers' biases; 3) Paternal centred professionalism; 4) Paternal competence; and 5) Facilitating conditions. The respondents were also invited to make additional comments at the end of the questionnaire.

4.3 Results

The current study aimed to investigate into fathers' perceptions of their participation in ECE. The data from the Father Participation Questionnaire (fathers' version) were analysed using Statistical package for Social Sciences version 23. First the descriptive statistics were computed to determine the mean and standard deviations amongst all factors' scale scores and items to examine distribution of the data. Then, an independent sample t-test and one way ANOVA were calculated to ascertain whether a difference existed among the

participants in various groups where a difference among them was apparent (e.g., older fathers vs. younger one, well-educated fathers vs. less educated one, etc.). Finally, cross tabulation were performed to assess the levels of participants' satisfaction by combination of the embedded questions in the questionnaire. These will be explained in the subsequent sections.

4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics and Comparisons across Factors

Table 4.2 presents mean and standard deviations for all respondents in all factors. Overall, the mean values demonstrated the highest value for the Fathers' attitudes factor indicating that respondents were mostly positive in this regard. It also demonstrated the lowest value for Facilitating conditions indicating that fathers believed that their participation has not been facilitated in ECE centre with almost no attempts to improving conditions for their participation in ECE.

Table 4. 2 Descriptive Statistics of Factors' Scale Scores

Factors	N of Items (Number of the respondents=50)	Mean	Range
Fathers' Attitude	6	4.38	18-30
Fathers' Biases	10	3.07	24-37
Parental Cantered Professionalism	16	3.03	26-62
Parental Competence	8	3.84	22-38
Facilitating Conditions	10	2.85	10-37

Note. The ranges presented in the table indicate the minimum and maximum range not the range of data

4.3.1.1 Fathers' Attitudes

When asking fathers to report on their perceptions towards their role, almost all fathers agreed that they are important in their children's education. Results showed that they are interested to participate in their children's education and believed that they have a role in

support their children's development. Furthermore, parenting was mentioned at the same priorities level of mothers. Table 4.3 presents the data for Fathers' attitudes.

Table 4. 3 Results for Fathers' Attitudes with Mean and Standard Deviations

Fathers' Attitudes		M	SD	% Reporting Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Reporting Neutral	% Reporting Strongly Agree or Agree
1	I am important for my child/children's education.	4.74	.44	0	2	98
2	I am interested in participating in my child/children's education.	4.56	.67	2	4	94
3	I am teacher too.	4.50	.81	4	2	94
4	I play a central role in my child/children's personality development.	4.48	.76	4	4	92
R5	Parenting is less of a priority for me than for my child/children's mother.	4.12	1.00	78	14	8
6	I am more likely to participate in physical activities with my child/children.	.90	.81	2	32	66

R: Reverse Item

Note. Minimum=0 and maximum=5

4.3.1.2 Fathers' Biases

When asked about the biases of fathers' participation, the majority of the participants disagreed about the influence of their children age on their participation. Similarly, when asked about fathers' parenting skills, fathers reported that they are confident in their parenting skills; an equal portion of fathers agreed that teachers do not lack confidence in this regard. Respondents did not believe that there were any influences imposed by their relationships with their children's mother as well as the mothers' roles on their participation in their children's ECE centres. Two factors, communication with teachers and fathers' time

schedule, were considered as the least important biases in fathers' mind. Table 4.4 presents the mean values and standard deviations of the responses in this factor.

Table 4. 4 Results for Fathers' Biases with Mean and Standard Deviation

Fathers' Biases		M	SD	% Reporting Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Reporting Neutral	% Reporting Strongly Agree or Agree
R1	You enjoy interaction with school age children more than preschool age children.	3.98	.98	70	16	14
R2	Teachers lack confidence in the fathers' ability to parenting.	3.91	.97	71	18	11
R3	Your relationship with your child/children's mother affects your participation.	3.83	1.11	66	20	14
R4	Your concern about your own parenting skill.	3.78	1.20	65	16	19
R5	Mothers' attitudes towards father parenting skill.	3.76	1.01	62	20	18
R6	It is generally easier for ECE teachers to communicate with mothers than fathers.	3.64	1.13	58	24	18
R7	Mothers care more deeply about their children's education.	2.19	1.05	64	20	16
8	The lack of male staff in the early childhood centres hinders your participation.	1.87	.94	74	12	14
9	Centre's attitudes to fathers' participation in the centre's environment.	1.85	1.03	74	14	12
R10	Your time schedules impacts your level of participation.	1.81	1.01	12	8	80

R: Reverse Item

Note. Minimum=0 and maximum=5

4.3.1.3 Paternal Centred Professionalism

When asked to report professional attempts of ECE centres to increase fathers' presence, approximately all fathers reported that they are spoken to by teachers. The majority of participants reported that they have been invited to the centres' events, and have been asked for help. Additionally, fathers reported that they appreciate encouragement from centres as well as planned activities targeting fathers by centres. Table 4.5 presents the results for the Parental centred professionalism with mean and standard deviations.

Table 4. 5 Results for the Paternal Centred Professionalism with Mean and Standard Deviation

Paternal Centred Professionalism		M	SD	% Reporting Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Reporting Neutral	% Reporting Strongly Agree or Agree
1	I am spoken to teachers during drop-off and pick-up times.	4.00	.96	8	16	76
2	Inviting fathers to the centre to participate in educational activities.	3.83	.78	6	22	72
3	Advertising special days at convenient times for me to go, share ideas and help the centre.	3.62	.89	10	28	62
4	Asking fathers for help.	3.38	.96	16	26	58
5	Encouraging fathers to take active roles in ECE centre.	3.53	.97	12	30	58
6	Planning activities for fathers based on their interests.	3.21	.95	18	36	46
7	Sending written correspondence to me even if I live apart from my child/children.	3.19	.97	18	54	28
8	I am encouraged to go early and play with my child/ children.	3.04	1.02	26	44	30
9	Inviting fathers to the centre separately.	3.02	1.01	22	30	48
10	My picture can be seen in my child/children's portfolios.	2.92	1.42	48	11	41
11	Offering activities within a fathers' comfort zone.	2.89	.93	30	36	34
12	Collecting information about me.	2.83	.91	36	40	24
13	Matching up new fathers with me in the centre.	2.83	.78	26	60	14
14	Having an environment in the centre that reflects my interests.	2.79	.97	36	40	24
15	I am giving responsibilities for the centre's events.	1.98	1.18	78	8	14
16	I and other fathers organise a group within the centre.	1.50	.70	92	6	2

Note. Minimum=0 and maximum=5

4.3.1.4 Paternal Competence

When asking fathers to rank the Paternal competence factor in ECE centres, they mostly agreed that they are willing to go to the centre and participate in their children's education. They believed that they are confident to inquire about their children's education. Similar proportions of fathers reported that they feel comfortable in the centre's environment. However, only half of the fathers believed that their children enjoy their presence in the ECE centre. Additionally, equal number of participants reported that they only drop-off and pick up their children, with the other half being neutral. Table 4.6 presents the results for Parental competence with mean and standard deviations.

Table 4. 6 Results for Paternal Competence with Mean and Standard Deviations

Paternal Competence		M	SD	% Reporting Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Reporting Neutral	% Reporting Strongly Agree or Agree
1	I am interested in participating in my child/children's education.	4.43	.79	4	6	90
2	I have the confidence to ask teachers questions about my child/children.	4.42	.64	2	8	90
3	I feel comfortable to ask questions about my child/children.	4.33	.82	4	16	80
R4	I attend the centre only for events.	3.94	.93	8	16	76
5	My children enjoy spending time with me in the centre.	3.64	.74	2	46	52
6	I regularly go to the centre.	3.30	1.46	38	8	54
R7	I only drop-off and pick-up my child/children.	2.98	1.36	36	22	42
8	Your concern about your own parenting skills.	3.78	1.20	68	15	17

R: Reverse Item

Note. Minimum=0 and maximum=5

4.3.1.5 Facilitating Conditions

When asking fathers about the facilitators that may help them to get more involved, they seemed to have no particular idea; the scores showed a slight decrease compared to the results obtained from other factors in the questionnaire. However, participants reported that being aware of different cultures and choosing culturally appropriate language to be communicated with would be the most helpful approach. Fathers ranked special training for teachers as the least important approach to increase fathers' participation. Table 4.7 presents the results for Facilitating conditions with mean and standard deviations.

Table 4. 7 Results for Facilitating Conditions with Mean and Standard Deviations

Facilitating Conditions		M	SD	% Reporting Strongly Disagree or Disagree	% Reporting Neutral	% Reporting Strongly Agree or Agree
1	Being aware of cultural differences with different groups of fathers.	2.35	.70	15	38	47
2	Getting into schedule with me.	2.13	.57	12	64	24
3	Conducting a survey of my ideas and interests.	2.11	.79	27	36	37
4	Holding parent-teacher meeting especially for fathers.	2.11	.79	27	37	36
5	Providing flexible programmes for fathers.	2.00	.69	22	50	28
6	Creating father-friendly environment for fathers in the centre.	1.91	.80	34	34	32
7	Training female teachers and staff to encourage my participation in the centre.	1.89	.72	32	46	22
8	Having more male staff in the centre.	1.89	.79	37	36	27
9	Different choice of words is required when interacting with fathers.	1.55	.65	14	36	50
10	Having teachers well trained to work with fathers.	1.09	.28	86	8	6

Note. Minimum=0 and maximum=5

4.3.2 Independent Sample t-test

Further analyses were completed to ascertain whether a difference exists between the scores obtained by participants in each of the five factors (i.e. Fathers' attitudes; Fathers' biases; Paternal centred professionalism; Paternal competence; and Facilitating condition) of the questionnaire. The whole cohort was divided in four groups based on their demographic

variables including marital status; working hours; education; and hours of children's care in ECE centres.

The results of an independent sample t-test can be found in Table 4.8 for each group. For marital status, married ($N=42$, $M= 26.38$, $SD= 2.97$) and separated fathers ($N= 8$, $M= 3.33$, $SD= 2.69$) showed no significant differences in factors' scores. Additionally, no differences were evident in factors' scores among participants' working hours; that is those working part-time ($N= 9$, $M= 25.67$, $SD= 3.87$) and those working full-time ($N= 41$, $M= 26.44$, $SD= 2.69$) appeared to have very similar perceptions on the areas asked in the questionnaire. Results also showed no difference in factors' scores among fathers' education which can be interpreted as fathers with a certificate and those with a university qualification have also no differing perceptions on the factors asked in the questionnaire; finally, no differing perceptions were found among the respondents considering children's hours attending to ECE centres (i.e., children attending ECE programmes for 1-3 days and those attending 4-5 days).

Table 4. 8 Results of an Independent Sample t-test

Groups		Factors														
		Fathers' attitudes			Fathers' biases			Paternal centred professionalism			Paternal competence		Facilitating conditions			
		M	(SD)	Sig. t-test	M	(SD)	Sig. t-test	M	(SD)	Sig. t-test	M	(SD)	Sig. t-test	M	(SD)	Sig. t-test
Marital Status	Married	26.38	(2.97)		30.33	(2.85)		48.11	(6.23)		30.47	(4.19)		28.19	(4.96)	
	Non married	25.88	(2.69)	.64	32.57	(1.61)	.22	51.13	(5.56)	.58	31.00	(2.44)	.12	30.13	(3.60)	.61
Hours of work	Part-time	26.13	(3.01)		30.37	(3.16)		48.55	(5.78)		30.15	(3.39)		29.00	(4.14)	
	Full-time	26.58	(2.46)	.33	31.73	(2.19)	.33	47.67	(7.80)	.57	31.27	(5.02)	.21	26.42	(5.99)	.61
Education	Certificate/ High school diploma	24.94	(3.47)		31.27	(2.25)		50.50	(4.91)		30.07	(2.23)		29.36	(3.67)	
	University degree	27.00	(2.33)	.01	30.39	(3.05)	.43	47.63	(6.61)	.50	31.14	(4.55)	.00	28.17	(5.21)	.44
Hours	1-3 days	26.40	(2.92)		30.00	(2.55)		46.33	(7.04)		29.33	(3.65)		28.29	(6.07)	
	4-5 days	26.23	(2.94)	.56	31.11	(2.91)	.70	50.11	(5.15)	.44	31.59	(3.91)	.39	28.70	(3.85)	.38

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was then conducted to explore the impact of the participants' age on the factors' scores. To this end, participants were divided into three age groups including under 30 years, 31- 40 years; and above 40 years. Results of the ANOVA indicated a significant interaction effect for age and Fathers' biases factor [$F(2, 40) = 4.24, p = 0.02$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Scheffe test indicated that the mean score for the participants between 31- 40 was significantly different than the scores for the participants above 40. Perceptions of the participants under 30 years of age did not significantly differ from either participating groups (i.e., those between 31- 40 years and those above 4 years of age).

Table 4. 9 Results of One-Way Analysis of Age in FPQ Factors

		Factors														
Group		Fathers' attitudes			Fathers' biases			Paternal centred professionalism			Paternal competence			Facilitating conditions		
		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Age	Between groups	2			2			2			2			2		
	Within groups	47	.64	.53	40	4.24	.21	43	3.25	.48	39	2.27	.11	41	1.66	.20
	Total	49			42			45			41			43		

4.3.3 The Embedded Questions

Cross tabulation analysis was utilized to interpret the data from the four embedded questions in the questionnaire (see Tables 4.10 and 4.11).

When asked about the frequency of communication with teachers (father-teacher communication) and the levels of satisfaction, all fathers reported their satisfaction when they have a chance to communicate with teachers three times or more per week. However, as shown in Table 4.10, 16.7% percent of fathers were dissatisfied when they have no

communication with teachers with 83% percent of fathers being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (neutral) in this regard.

Table 4. 10 Results of Cross-tabulation Analysis

Frequency of communication	Participants' satisfaction		
	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied
None	16.7	83.3	0.0
1-2 times	0.0	21.4	78.6
3-5 times	0.0	0.0	100.0
More than 5 times	0.0	0.0	100.0

When asked about the number of teachers being spoken to and the levels of satisfaction in this regard, 87% percent of fathers were satisfied when they have had a chance to communicate with three to five teachers per week. Table 4.11 demonstrates that fathers are more satisfied when they meet and communicate with more individual teachers. The same is true when they have more chances to communicate with teachers (see Table 4.10).

Table 4. 11 Results of Cross-tabulation Analysis

Tallying of teacher	Participants' satisfaction		
	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied
None	10.0	90.0	0.0
1-2 teachers	3.1	18.8	78.1
3-5 teachers	0.0	12.5	87.5

4.4 Discussion

This study gathered survey data on fathers' participation in ECE from fathers (N=50) whose children attended ECE centres in New Zealand. The survey explored fathers' perceptions regarding the ECE centres. Five board areas (factors) were considered based on the teachers' perceptions investigated in the current thesis (reported in Chapter 3). These factors were: Fathers' attitudes; Fathers' biases; Paternal centred professionalism; Paternal competence; and Facilitating conditions.

Majority of fathers reported positive perceptions in their attitudes with the mean value of 4.38 showing strong positive perceptions in this factor. Since the majority of participants (about 70%) were educated fathers who shared parenting with their wives (about 85%), they seemed to have recognition of the importance of their role in their children's education. Additionally, fathers believed that they are competent parents similar to mothers. Since fathers' roles in families have been changed in response to the increased number of working mothers due to the societal changes (Ihmeideh, 2014; Jethwani et al., 2014; Saracho & Spodek, 2008), New Zealand fathers seem to have followed such a paradigm shift and share more responsibilities in parenting and caring of young children. When shared responsibilities defines by this interpretation is supported by the data reported in this study demonstrating fathers were interested in participating in their children's education. This finding is in line with the studies reported by a number of researchers internationally (see J. Fagan & Stevenson, 2002; Freeman et al., 2008; McBride & Lutz, 2004).

Looking into the mean value of fathers' responses for the Paternal competence factor ($M = 3.84$), it can be interpreted that fathers consider themselves as competent parents in ECE. Fathers reported that they feel comfortable to ask questions about their children, and they believed that they have confidence to talk to ECE teachers. Additionally, many fathers (about 60%) believed that children enjoy spending time with fathers in ECE centres. This finding is supported by a number of international research (e.g., Ihmeideh, 2014; McBride & Mills, 1993) highlighting an increased awareness of fathers' competence within ECE.

Considering Fathers' biases, they reported moderate perceptions towards programmes' effectiveness regarding their participation in ECE centres with the mean value of 3.07. Less than half of the respondents reported that ECE centres' and mothers' attitudes may affect their participation in ECE. Fathers (66%) also reported that their relationships

with their children's mother may not influence on their participation in ECE. This contrasts with some published research that not only mothers-fathers relationship can influence fathers' participation in ECE, but mothers have an influencing role in fathers' participation and may be considered as the gate keeper of fathers' participation in ECE (Downer et al., 2008; McBride & Mills, 1993; Peterson, 2014).

Increasing the number of male ECE teachers has been considered as one of the approaches that may enhance fathers' participation in ECE through providing a gender balance which may help fathers to feel comfortable in ECE centres (Farquhar, 2012; Freeman et al., 2008). While previous studies stated that male staffing in ECE may positively influence fathers' participation (Burgess, 2005; Raikes et al., 2005), the findings from the current study seemed to be different. The lack of male staffing was considered as one of the lowest influencing factors in fathers' participation in ECE.

Consistent with a number of published studies, the findings of the current study suggested that fathers' work hours and time schedule should be considered as a barrier in their participation in ECE (Carpenter & Towers, 2008; Freeman et al., 2008; Turbiville & Marquis, 2001). In contrast with published research, creating a father-friendly environment and collecting fathers' ideas and interests were not considered as facilitators by fathers in this study (T. Kahn, 2006; Peterson, 2014; J. M. White et al., 2011).

However, fathers generally (about 68%) reported that they would like to be invited to ECE centres and participated in educational activities. They also welcomed the idea of the centres advertising special days for them to go to the centres and share their interest and ideas at their convenient times. Similar to the results of some published research, some fathers in the current study reported that they did not like to be invited separately to ECE centres and

have parent-teacher meetings scheduled especially for them (Raikes et al., 2005; Turbiville & Marquis, 2001). While ECE teachers have reported in previous studies that contacting fathers may increase their participation in ECE centres (McBride et al., 2001), the findings of the current study suggested that written correspondence to fathers even if they live apart from their children cannot be considered as a facilitator of fathers' participation in ECE.

Additionally, the results revealed that fathers reported the lowest value on the Facilitating Conditions factor ($M = 2.85$). This can be interpreted as the participating fathers did not consider the given items as the facilitators that could enhance their participation in ECE. This also argues that fathers might see themselves as participating fathers in their children's education who do not need further facilitating conditions. Additionally, fathers may believe that they do not need to participate in ECE programmes to be identified as participated fathers. Additionally, fathers might consider other items (i.e., inviting them to do some specific activities) as facilitating conditions. Further studies are needed to use interview/narrative approaches to shed light on fathers' perspectives to further highlight facilitating conditions.

The findings also suggested that the language to be used with fathers could be considered as a facilitator of fathers' participation in ECE; half of the fathers reported that they preferred a different choice of words when teachers converse with them. Language can be considered as a facilitator which may help fathers improve their communication with ECE teachers. However, this finding did not reveal what changes in the language fathers prefer or whether mothers might like a change in language as well. Further studies should investigate the aspects of the language and whether mothers think like fathers in this respect.

Finally, since cultural differences need to be considered in fathers' participation (Brannen & Nilsen, 2006; Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001), the results of the current thesis revealed that about half of the fathers considered being aware cultural differences should be considered as a facilitating condition for fathers' participation in ECE. Additionally, fathers believed that professional developments and training courses do not facilitate their participation in ECE. However, this finding should be interpreted cautiously since fathers are not very clear on how differing cultures may adopt such a shift. It is also of great interest to investigate cultural conditions to extend paternal contributions.

4.5 Conclusion

The results reported in this chapter demonstrated fathers' perceptions and practices and how they are participated in ECE programmes. The findings verified teachers' perceptions reported in this thesis (Chapter 3) and suggested that fathers need encouragement, father-focused programme and using a common language which could improve fathers' participation in ECE centres.

The current study has identified a clear need for an intervention study for considering fathers' need and interest within ECE programme design. Chapter 5 presents an investigation of the impact of a sample intervention programme on fathers' participation in ECE centres.

Chapter 5

Study 3: The Effectiveness of Father-Focused Programme on Fathers' Participation in Early Childhood Education Centres

5.1 Introduction

Although there is an increased awareness of the critical role of fathers in children's educational development, the development of support programmes designed specifically for a father or father-figure have received less attention in Early Childhood Education (ECE) (McBride et al., 2001; Turbiville & Marquis, 2001; J. M. White et al., 2011). Such programmes have the potential to enhance fathers' participation in ECE. That is, such programmes may prepare fathers to have more active roles in their children's education, in particular in ECE centres (Green, 2003; McBride et al., 2001; Palm & Fagan, 2008; Potter et al., 2012; Schwartz, 2004). Despite recent efforts to engage fathers in ECE, many fathers seems to be hesitant to be involved in their children's ECE, and usually lag behind mothers in this respect (Green & Cooper, 2008; McBride et al., 2001). This lack of fathers' presence in ECE may stem from sociocultural traditions and gender stereotype, known barriers to fathers' participation in ECE. Research in ECE holds the argument that fathers do not see themselves as advocates for their children's well-being as mothers do. In addition, traditionally women are favoured over men in child caring (Ihmeideh, 2014).

The results from Study 1 (Fathers' Participation in Early Childhood Education Centres: Teachers' Perceptions) presented in Chapter 3 of the current thesis suggested that while teachers are aware of the significant role of fathers in ECE, fathers are not mostly included in ECE centres' programmes. Teachers also believed that it is necessary to consider

fathers' comfort zone and set activities based on their interests to encourage their participation in ECE programmes. Additionally, Study 2 (Fathers' Participation in Early Childhood Education Centres: Fathers' Perceptions) presented in Chapter 4 supported these findings and indicated that fathers may need to be supported and approached by teachers to have better engagement with their children's ECE. This is perhaps because ECE is mostly seen as a female dominant sector (Campbell-Barr, 2017; Farquhar, 2012). Taken together, these findings suggest the necessity to target fathers' interests in planning activities for them exclusively, which may enhance fathers' participation in their children's ECE.

As explored in Chapter 2, according to the published research literature, one possible solution to increase fathers' presence in ECE centres is through father-focused programmes to support fathers to be recognised and feel welcomed in ECE. However, there is a limited number of studies that have examined the effectiveness of father-focused programmes, particularly those that have been implemented in ECE centres (Green & Cooper, 2008; McBride et al., 2001; Potter et al., 2012; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006).

Additionally, fathers' interests and willingness to get involved in their children's education has been given attention in research literature (Raikes & Bellotti, 2006). There is an increase in the number of studies on fathers' roles in the development of their children's emergent literacy skills (Varghese & Wachen, 2015), particularly those that have been implemented in the home environment and with partnership of both mothers and fathers. While research on fathers in the home environment is increasing, limited attention has been paid to father-focused programmes targeting children's early literacy skills in ECE centres.

To this end, the current study (Study 3) has been designed to focus on three main objectives. The first objective was to examine whether a father-focused programme would

influence the frequency of fathers' presence and their interactions with teachers at ECE centres. An intervention with the aim of measuring fathers' participation in ECE centres including fathers' literacy skills when reading to young children was designed and implemented. This intervention led to the second and third objectives of this study; that is, (i) whether fathers' reading behaviours change in response to a multiple-component book club intervention; and (ii) whether fathers' reading behaviours would influence their children's print awareness skills (the educational attainment that was hypothesised to be positively influenced by fathers' participation in the ECE). These aims are summarized in the following questions:

- 1) Does a father-focused programme influence fathers' participation in ECE centres?
- 2) Do reading behaviours of fathers change in response to the father-focused programme (an emergent literacy programme called Daddy Book Club programme)?
- 3) Do print awareness skills of children change in response to father's attendance to the Daddy Book Club programme?

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Study Design

This study utilised an experimental design using a pre-test/post-test to examine the effectiveness of an emergent literacy intervention for fathers regarding their participation in their children's ECE centres. An experimental approach is one of the most commonly used quantitative method which compares variables under controlled conditions (Cohen et al., 2011; Mutch, 2005) (more details see Chapter 3, section 3.2.1). A comparison group was

used to establish whether that fathers' presence during the intervention programme for the experimental group matched with peers' prior to participation in the intervention

5.2.2 Participants

Following ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC) (Appendix 2), 20 ECE centres in Christchurch were invited to participate in this study, with a total of eight centres agreeing to participate (with approximately 30 children in each). These centres were located in different parts of the city representing the various socio-economic statuses of the town. Four centres were selected randomly to be placed in the experimental group. The other four comprised the comparison group. To examine the existing differences between the two groups, the total number of males contacting the centres was calculated. The number calculated during the two observation sessions for each centre prior to the experiment which showed relatively similar results for all centres suggesting that the centres in each group were relatively homogeneous. These results have been summarised in Table 5.1 and 5.2.

Table 5. 1 Males' Presence at Pre-observation on Experimental Group

Number of Centres	Experimental Group									
	C1		C2		C3		C4		C1-C4	
Time of observation	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2
Total number of seen male	11	6	10	9	1	1	12	8	34	24

Note. C= ECE Centre, T=Time

Table 5. 2 Males' Presence at Pre-observation on Comparison Group

Number of Centres	Comparison Group									
	C1		C2		C3		C4		C1-C4	C1-C4
Time of observation	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2
Total number of seen male	9	12	10	8	3	2	6	2	28	24

Note. C=ECE Centre, T=Time

During centres observations, invitations to participate in the study were sent to all fathers (n= 150) whose children were older than 2 years old and attending the centres. Information letters informed fathers about the purpose and procedure of the study and passed on information about how they could participate in the study. The participants were reassured of their privacy and rights including the right to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty. Additionally, necessary permissions were obtained from parents/guardians of the children who took part in the study (see Appendix 5). The consent form for the children included words that children could understand when read to them, and parents/guardians were requested to assist them in seeking consent from children using the form provided. All participants were asked to sign the form if they agreed to participate in the study (Further details in were provided in Chapter 3, section 3.2.2). Seven fathers volunteered to participate in the experimental group while five fathers accepting to take part in the comparison group. Fathers ranged in age from 33.00 to 40.00 years; the children (4 girls, 8 boys) of these fathers ranged in age from 2.00 to 5.00 years. The ethnic distribution of the fathers and children were predominantly New Zealand European (75%) with the English language being the home language for all children with the exception of three children from other countries who were classified as 'other' in the analyses. Table 5.3 presents the age and ethnic distributions of fathers and children from both groups.

Table 5. 3 Characteristics of Participant Group

		Experimental group	Comparison group
Father	Number	7	5
	Range of age in year, month	36.0 – 42.0	33.0 – 39.1
	Mean of age in year, month	38.9	36.4
Children	Number	M: 6; F: 1	M: 2; F: 3
	Range of age in year, month	2.0 – 4.1	3.0 - 5.0
	Mean of age in year, month	3.2	3.6
Ethnicity	New Zealand European	85%	60%
	Other	15%	40%

Data were collected from eight centres; 12 fathers (seven from the experimental group, and five from the comparison group) and 12 children (seven from the experimental group, and five from the comparison group).

5.2.3 Assessment Procedure

Both the experimental and the comparison group completed pre-observation and assessments, followed by the post-observation and assessments. The assessments included father-child shared reading and children's print awareness. All observations and assessments were administered by the researcher and were conducted over eight weeks. The experimental group also received intervention programme between the pre-post observation and assessments.

Pre-post observations occurred for both the experimental and comparison group two weeks prior to the intervention and two weeks after the intervention. The Recording Observation Sheet presented in details in section 5.2.4.1 was completed during pre-post observations. Each group was observed twice before and after the experiment. Centres in

both groups were observed in two mornings (drop off time) and two afternoons (pick up time) within eight weeks. Observations were completed during children's drop off and pick up time (approximately for two hours each time) to track changes in father-teacher interactive relationships (Appendix 8 presents an example of the recording observation sheet).

Fathers in both experimental and comparison groups completed a five-minute shared reading session with their children prior to the intervention and once after the intervention programme. All shared reading sessions followed by children's early literacy assessments in both groups (i.e., experimental and comparison groups).

Assessments occurred in a quiet corner in the ECE centre. Time to complete the shared reading sessions met fathers' and centres' time schedule. All shared reading and children's assessment sessions were recorded by a voice recorder. The scoring occurred during and at a later date using the audio records based on the Reading Behaviour Checklist (see Appendix 9) and Preschool Word and Print Awareness (see appendix 10) measure (discussed in details in sections 5.2.4.2 and 5.2.4.3).

During the reading and assessment sessions, the researcher did not intervene to re start the reading if a child was not interested in completing the task. The session was cancelled and attempted again later. Prior to reading, fathers and their children were encouraged to choose books from the centre's book shelf, or they could bring a familiar book from home. Fathers were asked to read to their child like what they usually did at home. Following pre-assessment, fathers in the experimental group participated in a three-week multi component emergent literacy intervention programme.

5.2.4 Measures

5.2.4.1 Recording Observation Sheet

Systematic observation of human's behaviour in natural settings may lead to description of the dynamic of the situation (J. Kahn & Best, 2006). This study utilised recording observation sheet to observed fathers/males presence in ECE centres. The recording observation sheet was adopted from previous studies (Duncan et al., 2005; McBride et al., 2001). Items were selected based on the aspects that were hypothesised to change in response to the intervention. These items captured the quantity of fathers/males presence and their interactions with teachers. The sheet also recorded information on a place and purpose of their interactions (e.g. tallying the numbers, who initiated the contact and location of the contact) (Appendix 8).

5.2.4.2 Reading Behaviour Checklist

Selections of behaviours were taken from Parent-Child Reading Behaviour Checklist (Collings, McNeill, & Van Bysterveldt, 2012) previously used in a study of home literacy of teenage patents. Behaviours were selected relevant to the reading behaviours of the experimental and comparison group that would be expected to change in response to the intervention. Fathers were scored on their use of the specific behaviour once per each page of the reading book. For example if a father named three items on a single page, they were credited once for the behaviour 'points out things in the pictures'. If they repeated this behaviour on the next page, they were credited again. Appendix 9 presents an example of the reading behaviour checklist.

5.2.4.3 Preschool Word and Print Awareness Assessment

To examine children's early literacy, Preschool Word and Print Awareness Assessment (PWPA) (Appendix 10) (Justice & Ezell, 2001) was utilised. The PWPA was modelled by Clay's (1989) Concepts About Print (CAP), assessment for use with children of preschool age (Justice, Bowles, & Skibbe, 2006). This assessment focuses specifically on items of emergent literacy skills that are in the process of development during preschool ages. This measure examines preschool children's knowledge of print and word in book reading such as left-to-right directionality of print and their initial knowledge of words, and print symbols.

The children's assessment comprises two measures: Print Concepts and Words in Print. Each measure is to capture children's mapping and technical aspects of print and word knowledge by utilising different story books. The Print Concepts measure was administered using the story book, *Nine Ducks Nine* (S. Hayes, 1990), and the Words in Print measure was administered using the book *Spot Bakes a Cake* (Hill, 1994) (Justice & Ezell, 2001). These two books features large narrative prints and texts containing numerous instances of texts embedded within the illustrations. These characteristics are important when examining children's responsiveness to and interactions with print and word. Additionally, book aspects such as size and colourful illustrations encourage more children's engagement in the assessment tasks (Justice et al., 2006). The children received assessments twice; pre-and post-intervention. Each child's assessment required approximately 30 minutes to complete and was audio recorded.

5.2.5 Intervention

The Daddy Book Club intervention programme was used to assess fathers' participation in centres. This three-week modularised programme was an adopted version of the "Growing Great Readers"(Scott et al., 2016). The sessions were completed in the experimental group settings for half an hour each week focusing on various skills (see Table 5.4) with the overall structure of the session being relatively consistent (see Table 5.5). The first session focused on increasing the father's knowledge of the language and literacy development of their children, and how to choose an appropriate book according to their child's age and interest. The second and third sessions targeted increasing the father's skills when reading with their children in three key areas. Also, the third session as the final session included a summary of key points from the intervention programme. Fathers shared their experiences and challenges of implementing the methods with their children and involving in the centre's event. All the intervention sessions were audio recorded for reliability purposes.

Table 5. 4 Daddy Book Club Intervention Modules Overview

Week	Session Focus	Key Points
1	The Importance of Language and Literacy Choosing a good book	Overview of programme. Language and literacy development of children birth – five years. Role of the father in Language and Literacy development. Choosing an appropriate book for your child's age and interests.
2	Fun with words (Vocabulary) Talking about books (Questioning)	Expand on what your child says Ask them to find things Expand on what your child says Ask closed questions Ask open-ended questions Comment on the pictures Say it again and again
3	Learning about books (Book and Print Concepts) Putting it all together	What is print vs picture Talk about pictures Directionality (direction of move, locating the front of the book), Title, Features (signs, speech bubbles) Say it again and again

Table 5. 5 Description of Session Composition

Activity	Description
Introduction	Introducing the key ideas/overview of the day's session
Review	A review of the key points covered from last session
Structured teaching	Consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explicit teaching of key points of the session• Playing of a DVD clip to the week's topic
Interactive modelling and/or role play using a book	Consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further addresses and reiterates the key points of the session by researcher reading book or participant reading book.• Interactive discussion occurred during or after reading to focus on reader's use of key points, discussion of 'child's' behaviour, and/or discussion of presence and frequency of behaviours demonstrated by reader.

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Centre Observations

All males that were presented in the ECE centre during observation time were tallied. The total number of males observed prior to the experiment from the experimental and comparison centres (four centres in each group) seems relatively similar. The male presence varied from two to 21. Mean value of male seen in the two groups (experimental and comparison) was calculated to ensure the similarity of the two groups in this regard.

Table 5. 6 Comparison between Males’ Presence at Pre-observation on Experimental and Comparison groups

	Experimental group		Comparison group	
	(N of Centres = 4)		(N of centres = 4)	
	Number of fathers		Number of fathers	
	T1	T2	T1	T2
Total number of seen male	34	24	28	24
Range of seen male in the centres	2-20		5-21	
Mean of seen male	14.5		13	

Note. N=number, T1: First time observation, T2: Second time observation

Information from the observation recording sheets for each of the two-week period observations (i.e., the two pre observations or the two post observation) was combined following the intervention to provide descriptive perceptions of fathers’ participation in experimental and comparison groups. Frequencies of fathers’ presence and Mean value were calculated for males seen in the centres, frequency of males ‘contacts with centres, who initiated contacts, purpose and place of contacts (see Table 5.7).

Table 5. 7 Comparison between Experimental and Comparison Groups in Centres' Observations (Pre and Post Observations)

		Group	Pre/ Post	Number of tallies	Mean
Total number of seen male	Experimental	Pre		58	14.50
		Post		66	16.50
	Comparison	Pre		52	13.00
		Post		56	14.00
<hr/>					
Frequency of contacts for males	Experimental	Pre		38	9.50
		Post		47	11.75
	Comparison	Pre		29	7.25
		Post		34	8.50
<hr/>					
Who initiated contact					
Centre (Teacher/Manager)	Experimental	Pre		20	5.00
		Post		19	4.75
	Comparison	Pre		15	3.75
		Post		17	4.25
Father	Experimental	Pre		13	3.25
		Post		19	4.75
	Comparison	Pre		10	2.50
		Post		12	3.00
<hr/>					
Purpose of contact					
Educational	Experimental	Pre		13	3.25
		Post		23	5.75
	Comparison	Pre		17	4.25
		Post		11	2.75
Relationship	Experimental	Pre		25	6.25
		Post		24	6.00
	Comparison	Pre		13	3.25
		Post		13	3.25
<hr/>					
Place of contact					
Inside area	Experimental	Pre		18	4.50
		Post		26	6.50
	Comparison	Pre		18	4.50
		Post		11	2.75
Outside area	Experimental	Pre		19	4.75
		Post		20	5.00
	Comparison	Pre		13	3.25
		Post		13	3.25

Analyses of the observation data showed differences between experimental and comparison groups in all categories. Mean value also indicated a slight increase in the number of fathers seen in the experimental group (Figure 5.1). Both experimental and

comparison groups reported higher frequencies of contacts after the intervention programme. When examining who initiated contacts in the two groups, the results showed that centres (i.e., teachers and centre managers) in the comparison group initiated contacts more than the experimental group did. In contrast, fathers in the experimental group were found to initiate contacts more than the fathers in the comparison group did (Figure 5.2). Considering the purpose and place of the contacts, the data indicated that the experimental group has a higher number of contacts for educational purposes. This group also showed an increase in the frequency contacts they made inside the centres.

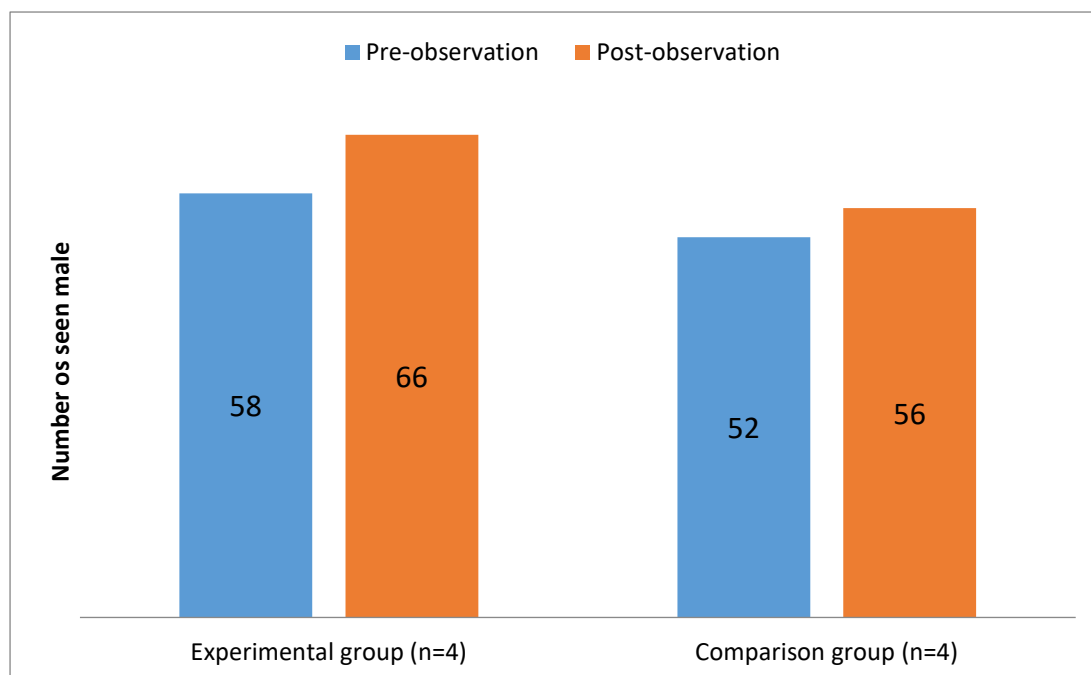


Figure 5. 1 Frequency of Seen Male in Experimental and Comparison Groups

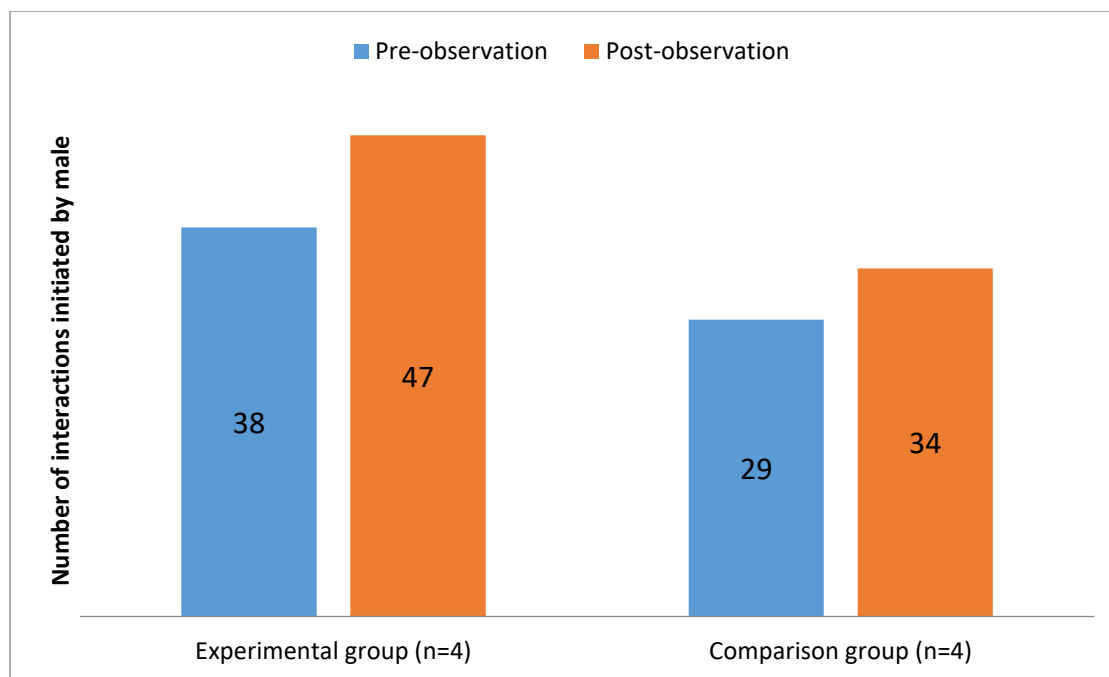


Figure 5. 2 Frequency of Contacts Initiated by Males in Experimental Group's Observations

5.3.2 Father-Child Shared Reading Behaviours

To check the homogeneity of the participants in the two groups, demographic information is presented in Table 5.8.

Table 5. 8 Comparison between Participant Groups

		Experimental group	Comparison group
Father	Number	7	5
	Range of age in year, month	36.0 – 42.0	33.0 – 39.1
	Mean of age in year, month	38.9	36.4
Children	Number	M: 6; F: 1	M: 2; F: 3
	Range of age in year, month	2.0 – 4.1	3.0 - 5.0
	Mean of age in year, month	3.2	3.6

Preliminary analysis compared the reading behaviours of the experimental and comparison groups to establish whether the experimental group's reading behaviours were typically conducted by fathers prior to completing the intervention. Mean value in reading behaviours at pre- assessment on any of the three areas (i.e. vocabulary; questioning; and book/print features) were assessed throughout the study (Table 5.9).

Table 5. 9 Comparison between Reading Behaviours at Pre-assessment on Experimental and Comparison Groups

Module	Experimental group (N of fathers = 7)		Comparison group (N of fathers = 5)	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
Vocabulary	12.86	4- 25	17.00	5-31
Questions	4.86	0-9	4.80	0-11
Book/Print	1.71	0-9	1.20	0-4

Since participants met certain criteria (e.g., their children's age) and were randomly assigned to either the experimental or the comparison group, it can be claimed that the participants were homogenised. Analyses were performed to highlight the changes observed in the shared reading behaviours of the experimental group following the intervention. A comparison between the pre- and post-assessments of paternal reading behaviours for the experimental and comparison groups by three module areas presented in Table 5.10 demonstrated an increase in the frequency observed for all module means from pre- to post-assessments.

Table 5. 10 Comparison between Experimental and Comparison Groups in Reading Behaviours (Pre and Post Assessments)

Module	Group	Pre/ Post	Mean	Range
Vocabulary	Experimental	Pre	12.86	4- 25
		Post	14.83	8- 26
	Comparison	Pre	17.00	5-31
		Post	16.75	8- 25
Questions	Experimental	Pre	4.86	0- 9
		Post	6.67	3- 10
	Comparison	Pre	4.80	0- 11
		Post	4.25	3- 7
Book/ Print	Experimental	Pre	1.71	0- 9
		Post	10.67	9- 14
	Comparison	Pre	1.20	0- 4
		Post	3.00	0- 9

Following the comparison analysis, checklist results for reading behaviour relating to print concept and word in print for the experimental and comparison groups were compared (see Table 5.11). The use of strategies relating to print concept among the fathers in the experimental group demonstrated a large increase between pre and post Mean values. Word focused behaviours during shared reading also showed an increase.

Table 5. 11 Experimental Group Reading Behaviour

	Group	Pre/ Post	Mean	Range
Print Concept	Experimental	Pre	1.71	0- 9
		Post	10.67	9- 14
	Comparison	Pre	1.20	0- 4
		Post	3.00	0- 9
Word in Print	Experimental	Pre	12.86	4- 25
		Post	14.83	8- 26
	Comparison	Pre	17.00	5-31
		Post	16.75	8- 25

5.3.3 Children Assessments

Analysis of children's assessment was performed to determine if print knowledge reported for the experimental group was equal to those for the comparison group prior to completing the intervention. Results indicated minor differences between the experimental and comparison group for print knowledge.

Table 5. 12 Comparison between Children's PWPA at Pre-assessment on Experimental and Comparison Groups

	Experimental group (N of children = 7)		Comparison group (N of children = 5)	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
Print Concepts	6.68	2- 13	7.00	4- 9
Word in Print	3.57	0- 8	4.60	1- 8
Total Score	10.43	3- 18	11.60	5- 17

Note. N=number

Following preliminary analysis, pre-and post-intervention results for the experimental group were compared to examine changes in children's print and word knowledge.

Mean value was computed which showed an increase in both print concept and word in print knowledge.

Table 5. 13 Comparison between Experimental and Comparison Groups in Children's PWPA (Pre and Post Assessments)

	Group	Pre/ Post	Mean	Range
Print Concept	Experimental	Pre	6.86	2- 13
		Post	8.86	6- 15
	Comparison	Pre	7.00	4- 9
		Post	8.20	5- 11
Word in Print	Experimental	Pre	3.57	0- 8
		Post	5.86	2- 10
	Comparison	Pre	4.60	1- 8
		Post	4.60	1- 6

5.4 Discussion

This study investigated the differences in fathers' participation among the centres where the intervention programme was implemented. It also compared the centres which were assigned to the control group with those that received the intervention programme. The overall effectiveness of a three-week father focused intervention programme was examined. Data were analysed to examine pre- and post-intervention changes between the two groups (experimental and control) to investigate: a) changes in frequency of male presence and father-teacher interactions in centres; b) changes in measuring three key areas (vocabulary, question and book/print) of the intervention on fathers' reading behaviours ; and c) changes in measuring the print knowledge of children.

5.4.1 Centre Observation

Findings from the Centres' observation supported the results demonstrated by Father's Survey (see Chapter 4), which indicated the need to invite fathers to participate in educational activities in ECE centres. The findings of the current study (Study 3) indicated a greater number of father's presences and contacts reported from the experimental group compared to the usual practice among the comparison group. Additionally, fathers in the experimental group were interested to have interactions with teachers related to educational purposes. These results suggest that the father-focused programme (Daddy Book Club) implemented in this study may have positive impacts on fathers making them feel valuable and important in their children's education (something to do inside the centre and not typical physical play outside, and also to do something especially related to education). If it is believed that fathers are positive about such programmes, it could be argued that these programmes may encourage them to get involved more with their children's education at ECE centres. These results are supported in the research literature indicating that to have a better participation in their children's early education; fathers need specific programmes for themselves (Green & Cooper, 2008; McBride et al., 2001; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006).

Of interest, in the current study, there is a lack of any change in the teachers' willingness to initiate conversation with fathers. This result is in line with another published study that indicated no differences existed in teachers' attitudes to involve fathers after a two-year intervention programme, which is in contrast with the expected outcome (McBride et al., 2001). However, as this study has not included mothers (i.e., teachers' engagement with mothers were not examined), it is not clear that whether lack of engagement from teachers is specific to fathers. Further studies are required to compare teachers' willingness to initiate conversation with mothers and fathers.

A number of reasons may explain why the number of contacts initiated by teachers did not improve following the intervention. Firstly, the data related to the possible differential impacts of the intervention targeted fathers. Hence, differences were found in the number of fathers contacting teachers. In fact, since the intervention programme focused on fathers, the findings in regards with teachers in this part should be cautiously generalized. Perhaps further studies are required to fully capture the changes in teachers' behaviours, too. Additionally, research has suggested that teachers' need to be briefed and equipped with resources and the various ways to encourage fathers' participation (Levine, 1993). Hence, according to the positive findings of the current study, it can be suggested that Daddy Book Club can be considered as an example of a father-focused programme in centres. Again, further research is required to explore various ways to enhance fathers' participation in ECE.

Secondly, the low rate of participation in both experimental and comparison groups may have impacted on the teachers' efforts to have more interactions with fathers. Teachers may have assumed conversations with fathers who are not interested in the activity were not necessary and placed more of their attention on fathers who participated in the intervention programme. Further studies with a larger sample size may be beneficial to determine the impact of the low rate of teachers' efforts to initiate conversation with the claimed reluctant fathers.

Finally, there may be something about accepting fathers to have secondary parental role in their children's education. Recently, the concept of fathers involved with their children both at home and ECE centres has received a great amount of attention. However, the published research literature has shown that the engagement and assessment in relation to fathers is still poor. The findings of the current study along with the previous research lend

strong support for the benefit of providing specific programmes for fathers to encourage active fathers' participation

5.4.2 Father-Child Shared Reading Behaviours

The effectiveness of the intervention programme was examined in vocabulary knowledge, comprehension questions and book/print-focused behaviours observed during shared reading interactions. Fathers in the experimental group displayed more frequent reading behaviours during shared reading with their children, in particular an increase was observed in the frequency of book/print-focused behaviours.

Fathers who participated in the intervention programme (Daddy Book Club) increased their own print concept behaviours, and print references behaviours which positively affected children's word knowledge. This result is consistent with those of Justice and Ezell's (2000) that indicated parents' print knowledge increased after their participation in home-based book reading programme, and in turn children acquired better knowledge of the written language. Several other studies have also argued that print knowledge is a key predictor of later reading development, and comprises key features of the foundation of emergent literacy skills (Justice & Ezell, 2001; Schwartz, 2004; Wing-Yin Chow & McBride-Chang, 2003). Additionally, shared reading while focusing on print knowledge may help develop children's skills such as inference from the text and connecting the text to their own experiences (Girard, Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2012; Justice & Ezell, 2000).

Beneficial results from father-child shared reading have been reported. Research has shown that parents who focus on intensive comprehension questions during shared reading could enhance better vocabulary and print skills in children. The findings from the current study are consistent with the findings of a large body of research showed the differences in

the word and questioning behaviours by fathers, reflecting the finding of previous studies (G. J. Whitehurst et al., 1994). Positive effects of shared book reading suggest improvement occur in the word and language knowledge of preschool children (Schwartz, 2004). Also, Schwartz (2009) discovered that father-child interactions during storybook reading in an observational study improve. Schwarz observed that fathers tend to use literal strategies with less potential for stimulating dialogues with the children during reading. Similarly, fathers appeared to be task-oriented and focus on the goal of the reading task which predicts children's vocabulary skills. Fathers provide opportunities of direct action and language-rich interactions with their children and use communicative diversity which predicts children's language skills as well (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2012; Varghese & Wachen, 2015).

The effectiveness of parent interventions during their children's early years' education that targets emergent literacy skills have been considered in the research literature (Reese, Sparks, & Leyva, 2010). The results from the current study demonstrated that fathers are able to learn and apply a range of emergent literacy strategies (such as print and word skills) when reading with their young children. Due to some limitations of the current study, further exploration around the impact of such intervention on fathers' behaviours is required.

5.4.3 Children's Print Knowledge

Findings from the children's PWPA assessment were similar to the findings demonstrated by observing fathers' reading behaviours. Children's print and word knowledge may have improved due to fathers' behaviours in using more print and word references. However, this improvement may have happened because participated children spent more time reading with their parents at home. Therefore, further studies should consider controlling this factor to gain a better insight.

The gains in the experimental group were in both print concept and word in print targeted at early literacy development. This finding in line with other studies indicated that instruction in parent's print focused behaviours resulted in an increase in children's early literacy skills (Justice & Ezell, 2000; Wing-Yin Chow & McBride-Chang, 2003). Additionally, children's word awareness appears to be consistently predicted by parent's attendance in shared book reading intervention. Some studies that focused on the quality of the language that fathers use with their children found that fathers usually employ varied and complex language that may expand children's word knowledge (Pancsofar & Vernon-Feagans, 2010; Rowe, Coker, & Pan, 2004).

The age of the children may impact fathers' use of referencing strategies. The mean age of the participants in the comparison group was three and half years old with the children in the experimental group being about three years old whose fathers placed more emphasis on print-focused behaviours. Future research is required to consider children's age in a relatively bigger sample size.

5.5 Conclusion

The current study examined the effectiveness of father-focused programmes in the ECE centre. Both ECE centres and teachers need to design activities to engage parents in their children's education. Given that fathers reported that they are interested in participating in their children's education, and also reported that they would like to talk about their children's education with ECE teachers, father-focused programmes can be considered as a facilitator to improve fathers' participation in ECE. The results of the current study supported the use of father training as an approach towards facilitating children's early literacy skills. The study verified the findings of the current thesis reported in Chapter 3 and 4, and

suggested that fathers' need to have facilitating conditions and encouragement by teachers to take part in their children's ECE centre. However future research is required to confirm the father-teacher relationships identified in this study.

Chapter 6

General Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The research reported in this thesis investigated teachers' and fathers' perceptions regarding fathers' participation in Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres in New Zealand. While the benefits of fathers' presence in their children's early years' education has been unanimously recognised by families, communities and education providers, fathers' participation in ECE still needs improvement. The current thesis aimed at exploring fathers' participation from two perspectives (i.e., ECE teachers and fathers) to identify ECE teachers' potential biases along with the facilitators and barriers of fathers' partnership to improve fathers' participation in ECE.

This thesis draws on the perspectives of Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence (J. Epstein, 2011). Epstein's theory integrates three spheres including the effect of school, family and community environments on children's educational development (see Chapter 2 for more details). Based on partnership models which hold the argument that teachers and parents are equally important in a child's educational development (Duncan & Te One, 2014; Hornby, 2011), consistent with the ECE curriculum in New Zealand (Te Whāriki), ECE teachers' and fathers' perceptions were investigated separately to shed light on the similarities and difference between their perceptions. Barriers and facilitators influencing fathers' participation in ECE were also identified. Finally, a specific father-focused programme was conducted to explore the impact of such programmes on fathers' participation in ECE. The father-focused programme implemented in the current thesis targeted literacy skills so its impact(s) could be examined not only on fathers' participation

(the focus of this thesis) but on the children's emergent literacy knowledge. Specifically, four broad questions were addressed in this thesis:

- 1) How do teachers in New Zealand perceive fathers' participation in ECE centres?
- 2) What do teachers consider as facilitators or barriers for fathers' participation in ECE centres?
- 3) What do fathers consider as facilitators or barriers for their participation in ECE centres?
- 4) Does a father-focused programme influence fathers' participation in ECE centres?

To this end, three studies were conducted. The following section presents a summary of each study separately followed by main discussion points in accordance with the research aims. At the end of this chapter, the practical implications and the limitations of the research are discussed, and further recommendations for future studies are suggested.

6.2 Summaries of the Studies

6.2.1 Study 1- Teachers' Perceptions of Fathers' Participation in ECE Centres

This descriptive study investigated the perceptions of 100 ECE teachers throughout New Zealand. Participants were invited through ECE centres, and the survey data were collected via a questionnaire which was specifically developed for this study. The questionnaire was modelled on previously published surveys, piloted and its reliability was calculated prior to data collection (see Chapter 3 for details). The questionnaire was to investigate teachers' attitudes and the factors that may facilitate or hinder fathers' presence in centres' programmes.

The results of the questionnaire can be argued to indicate that ECE teachers are aware of the importance of fathers' participation in ECE, and of a number of ways to encourage fathers' participation – which will be discussed further when programmes to increase fathers' participation are considered. Almost all participating teachers indicated that they recognise the value of fathers' roles in their children's education and development, which we will discuss in relation to ECE teachers' potential attitudes (biases) towards mothers and fathers in ECE contexts. Additionally, many of these teachers stated that as part of their professionalism, they are expected to encourage fathers to take active roles in ECE centres – a point that we will return to when we consider professional development implications towards the end of this chapter. The data also suggest that many ECE teachers seem to be mindful that improvements in fathers' participation in their children's education can be achieved through positive attitudes about interactions with fathers during drop-off and pick-up times, asking fathers for help, and inviting fathers to participate in educational activities in the centre. The potential effects of such perspectives will be discussed later in this chapter.

Additionally, the findings suggest that many ECE teachers are aware that advertising a special day at a convenient time for fathers may increase fathers' participation. The ECE teachers' responses also suggest that factors such as lack of male staff and fathers' work time schedule should be taken into consideration when determining ways to increase fathers' participation in ECE programmes. While these results can be interpreted as suggesting that the majority of teachers seem to be aware of, and seem to wish to take into account, fathers' comfort zone (i.e., fathers' needs, such as meeting work commitments) and the importance of father-friendly environment (such as a fellow male within the centre), many of these same ECE teachers seem to be unaware of other influencing factors on fathers' participation that has been identified by international research. For example, while mothers' role has been suggested as an influencing factor of fathers' participation (Green, 2003; McBride et al.,

2017; Palm & Fagan, 2008; J. M. White et al., 2011), many of the teachers in this study seem to be unaware of this as an influencing factor: only about one quarter of the participating teachers believed that mothers may influence fathers' participation. Similarly, while marriage satisfaction (often considered in terms of mother-father relationships in the relevant literature) has also been identified as an additional influencing factor in fathers' participation in studies from different parts of the world (Ihmeideh, 2014; Kwok et al., 2013), many of the teachers completing the current questionnaire do not appear to appreciate the role of this factor on fathers' participation; a relatively small number of teachers (19%) indicated that they believed that marriage satisfaction would influence fathers' participation. These latter findings could be due to the teachers' lack of awareness of the relevant international literature (something which training may need to consider) or a lack of understanding of the terminology used in the current questionnaire (something that will be considered again when discussing the limitations of the current research and the need for further, possibly more in-depth, studies into these influencing factors); however, these findings may also be indicative of NZ teachers' continued stereotypical views of males and females within the context of child rearing and work versus family roles – an argument that will be discussed further below.

However, before we discuss these points in detail, we should consider the findings obtained from the second study. In order to investigate fathers' perceptions on how their participation in ECE could be enhanced, similar survey data were collected from fathers, too. The results are summarized in the next section.

6.2.2 Study 2- Fathers' Perceptions of their Participation in ECE Centres

Similar to Study 1, this descriptive study investigated the perceptions of 50 fathers whose children attended ECE centres in New Zealand (see Chapter 4). The survey data were

collected through a modified questionnaire to that completed by teachers in Study 1. This enabled a direct comparison between teachers' and fathers' perceptions of factors that may facilitate or hinder fathers' participation in ECE. The results showed that fathers, similar to teachers, are aware of the importance of their participation in ECE with their own views on facilitators and barriers some of which being similar to the teachers but some being different.

The results demonstrated that fathers are aware of their roles and are interested in their children's educational development and care. However, compared to teachers' perceptions, fathers reported differing facilitators and barriers for their participation in ECE programmes. Fathers (50% agreed and 14% disagreed) believed that using a common language including the terms and words that are used in their daily life and work may facilitate their participation. Almost all fathers considered their inflexibility of work load and working hours as barriers of their participation in ECE programmes. The findings also revealed that fathers, unlike teachers, generally do not believe that teacher training (supporting) programmes, such as professional development for teachers on how to work with fathers in ECE is necessary and can enhance fathers' participation. Similarly, fathers, again unlike teachers, did not consider ECE male staffing as a facilitator for their participation in ECE indicating that fathers are happy with the current so called female dominated environment in ECE.

The findings suggest that understanding fathers' perceptions should offer information regarding potential ways (e.g., father-focused programmes) to enhance fathers' participation in ECE centres. To verify whether father-focused programmes may influence fathers' participation in ECE centre, Study 3, in a form of an intervention programme, was implemented to examine a father-focused programme on emergent literacy.

6.2.3 Study 3- The Effectiveness of a Father-Focused Programme on Fathers'

Participation in ECE Centres

Study 3 was an experimental study (see Chapter 5) which employed a pre/post-test to examine the impact of an intervention programme designed to enhance fathers' participation in ECE. Twelve fathers and their children participated in the intervention. The three-week intervention aimed to facilitate the fathers' use of reading behaviours to promote children's emergent literacy knowledge whilst sharing books with their young children. Fathers were briefed about the intervention programme, and their potentially significant role in their children's educational development was discussed. The impact of the intervention on father's reading behaviours, children's emergent literacy knowledge and fathers' participation in the ECE was examined. Changes in fathers' communication with teachers and behaviours during shared reading sessions were also examined.

Following the intervention, fathers were observed to contact teachers more frequently in the centre (i.e., a higher frequency of contacts was observed). Additionally, fathers seemed to communicate with teachers more about educational activities. Further, improvements were evident in fathers' reading behaviour (in all aspects examined including vocabulary, questions and print knowledge with the latter being more improved) which in turn increased children's knowledge of book reading and print concepts.

These results will be discussed in the following sections.

6.3 Interpretation of the Findings

The subsequent sections present the discussion points derived from the results of the three studies conducted in this thesis. First, teachers' contradictory views (lack of awareness of their biases) about fathers' participation will be discussed since bias or being unaware of

bias is believed to influence teachers' practice (Peterson, 2014). Then a comparison between teachers' perceptions and fathers' perceptions will be made in order to discuss facilitators or barriers of fathers' participation in ECE. Identifying similarities or differences between teachers' and fathers' perceptions may suggest the areas that teachers and fathers can work (or already are working) together (i.e., similarities between teachers' and fathers' perceptions), and also the areas that teacher's awareness should increase (i.e., differences between teachers' and fathers' perceptions) to help teachers encourage fathers' participation. Finally, father-focused programmes with an implemented example of an emergent literacy programme (Daddy Book Club) will be discussed in order to introduce the benefits of such practical programmes which may encourage fathers' participation in ECE centres.

6.3.1. Teachers' Biases

The findings of the current thesis revealed that teachers are either unaware or biased about the influencing factors that may encourage fathers' participation in ECE suggested internationally. A large body of international research has suggested that mothers' role should be considered in fathers' participation in ECE (McBride & Rane, 1997; Palm & Fagan, 2008). Father-mother relationship (also referred to marriage satisfaction) has also been reported important internationally (Kwok et al., 2013; Saracho & Spodek, 2008). However, the participating teachers in this study produced generally low scores in the questions related to mothers' role and marriage satisfaction in fathers' participation; only a small number of the teachers believed that marriage satisfaction (i.e., mother-father relationship) may influence fathers' participation while many other respondents expressed no views. This can be interpreted as the teachers are either unaware (lack of knowledge) of these influencing factors (i.e., mothers' perceptions and marriage satisfaction) or they are not willing (or biased) to talk about them. Lack of teachers' awareness or bias calls for teachers' training (support)

programmes; that is, if teachers have not been taught about these influencing factors, then it is not surprising that they do not see them as important. Alternatively, if teachers are taught about these influencing factors in their teacher education programmes but they are still reluctant to consider them, then it may be interpreted as the teachers' bias (perhaps stemming from a stereotypical view of mothers and fathers) which affects their views about these influencing factors; that is, they consider factors that fit with the bias but not those that do not. Further research, therefore, is required to clarify the teachers' views about the factors that they see as influencing fathers' participation.

Additionally, the findings of the current thesis on mothers' and fathers' role in ECE revealed that while the majority of the participating ECE teachers (75%) considered mothers and fathers equal in their parenting priorities, about 60% of them believed that mothers are naturally more sensitive caregivers than fathers, and that mothers care more deeply about their children's education than fathers do. This suggests that ECE teachers may see 'parenting priorities' as different from 'care', and consider mothers to be in charge of caring for young children, a finding that would be consistent with a large body of research (e.g., Cowan, Cowan, Pruett, Pruett, & Wong, 2009; Raikes et al., 2005). If this finding is interpreted as the tendency of teachers to consider mothers as carers for young children, consistent with the traditional belief of women being considered as carers, the presence of mothers in ECE (i.e., mothers, unlike fathers, are seen in ECE centres) can be justified.

The traditional (stereotyped) view considers females as natural carers. Hence, whether at home or in ECE centres, mothers' primary role is to look after (care for) the child. This may have led to the gender difference in ECE: as such ECE has developed as a support service provided for working mothers by other women (see also discussions of such issues in (Campbell-Barr, 2017; Osgood, 2009), and the focus of such services been on the care of

young children by women. Since ECE in 21st Century, unlike many other business sectors, is still a female dominated service, it can be inferred that such a traditional notion has not yet been changed in ECE. This can also be interpreted as ECE may represent the stereotyped (traditional) belief of gender role (i.e., a tendency towards female staffing) which makes it female dominated in New Zealand similar to international ECE practices. Similarly, ECE being a female dominated service suggests that there is a gender preference in the ECE work place. Again, it can be said that females (including mothers) are seen as having special features, such as biological features and emotional attributes associated with mothering needed to work with young children, which in turn may associate ECE with mothering (the traditional notion of ECE). The implication of this traditional view makes current ECE programmes female centred; that is, centres generally (perhaps unintentionally) consider females' interests and likes when developing programmes to enhance parental participation. As an example, flyers on the boards in an ECE centre are very likely to show a female character around children.

When mothers' participation is the focus of ECE centres (perhaps due to the stereotyped view that mothers are better carers), teachers are likely to develop a tendency to talk to mothers about the child's day including the child's education, care and behaviour even though the father may pick up the child from the centre. As an example (based on the researcher's personal observation), if a child misbehaves, the teacher may prefer to talk to the mother about it later and not to talk to the father who is picking up the child on that day. This example may demonstrate that fathers are (perhaps unintentionally) neglected, and argues for ECE teachers to be aware that their behaviours may lead to an unintended perception of preference for mothers over fathers so they can choose strategies to consider fathers and mothers equally in their practice. This interpretation reinforces the need for further research

to investigate aspects of gender role in ECE environment and examine ways to ensure that ECE teachers cultivate equal attitudes about and behaviours towards mothers and fathers.

Additionally, if the finding is interpreted as teachers are relatively unaware of their preference for mothers over fathers, they may not make efforts to enhance fathers' participation in ECE (Peterson, 2014; J. M. White et al., 2011) which may lead to less fathers' participation. In such cases, teachers' awareness needs to be addressed to enhance fathers' participation in ECE. For example, teachers and centres can inform parents of the importance of their roles in the work of the centre and share responsibilities between mothers and fathers. This should include information provided by the centre to the parents and may also involve inquiries about the child's day, child's sleeping patterns and nutrition, asking for the child's portfolio, etc. Furthermore, if teachers are supported to become aware of the influencing factors of fathers' participation, they may try to implement strategies to promote fathers' participation. To this end, training (support) programmes are recommended to explicitly discuss influencing factors of fathers' participation and encourage teachers to adopt strategies to improve their practice. In other words, teachers' awareness of their biases and knowledge of suitable strategies to overcome their biases (perhaps gained through training programmes) may facilitate change within the individual teacher behaviour and educational programmes.

In fact, one way to increase teachers' awareness of the common biases (suggested by national and international research) is training (support) programmes for teachers (Green & Cooper, 2008; Peterson, 2014). Training programmes have also been enunciated by the participating teachers who believed that professional development courses (perhaps in a form of workshop or seminar) are beneficial: about half of the teachers responded positively to the need of professional development to support their awareness of ways to enhance fathers'

participation in ECE. A professional ECE teacher, like all teachers, is required to have sufficient abilities, knowledge and awareness of multiple ways to reflect on their tendency to prefer one condition/person over another (i.e., being aware of their biases), including ethical viewpoints (Cameron, 2006; Campbell-Barr, 2017; G. MacNaughton, 2003). Such awareness (knowledge) is expected to help teachers make professional decisions, and such training (support) programmes would be an ideal way to raise teachers' awareness of the common biases in their field and the factors that may encourage fathers' participation in ECE. In short, it can be suggested that it is good for teachers to be explicitly taught about the influencing factors of fathers' participation that have been identified by research and also strategies to enhance fathers' participation in ECE.

However, the need for training (support) programmes should not be interpreted as this thesis is questioning the current ECE teacher education and professionalism in New Zealand. One of the goals of ECE professionalism is to form teachers' perceptions on partnership model which requires parents to work with teachers as professionals along with the centres in children's education and care which requires teachers to establish good interactions with parents (in this context, fathers). Given that the participating teachers in the current thesis seemed to be either unaware of their biases (a tendency towards mothers) or have differing views on influencing factors of fathers' participation, this area needs further focus in teacher training courses; the teachers also believed that training (support) programmes focusing on suitable strategies would help them to enhance their learning on how to work or communicate with fathers. In other words, increasing teachers' awareness of the common biases in their specialised field may suggest a positive interaction between teachers' awareness of their preferences and their behaviour at work. Hence, teachers should be aware of their biases so they can adopt strategies to be more professional. For example, if ECE teachers (who are almost female) are aware of gender role in ECE (i.e., if teachers are aware of fathers being

comfortable with female teachers in ECE and lack of male staffing is not influencing fathers' participation in ECE), they may develop positive father-teacher interactions to enhance fathers' participation. In other words, if a female teacher believes that fathers relate better with ECE male teachers (as reported by the participating teachers), she may not make efforts to engage with fathers, and prefers to talk to mothers about the child's day (e.g., nutrition, nappies, behaviour issues, etc.) during the drop-off and pick-up times which in turn shifts the responsibilities to mothers (i.e., inquiries about the child's day in the centre). That is, the current ECE practice may unintentionally push out fathers and neglect them in ECE. This finding highlights that ECE teachers should be aware that fathers are comfortable with female teachers in the current ECE environment and recruiting male staff has not been received well by fathers.

Additionally, the divergent views of the teachers in New Zealand with their international counterparts on the influencing factors of fathers' participation calls for further research to examine whether such differing views are due to lack of knowledge (or bias) of the ECE teachers in New Zealand who do not seem to consider mothers' role and mother-father relationship (marriage satisfaction) as influencing factors of fathers' participation in ECE, or there are other underlying reasons (this was beyond the scope of the current thesis and calls for future research). Again, the interpretation that the teachers are not aware of marriage satisfaction as an influencing factor of fathers' participation in ECE in New Zealand should be interpreted cautiously as the current thesis did not investigate marriage satisfaction in depth; perhaps future studies using a more qualitative design may provide an in-depth understating of this factor.

When it comes to parenting skills, teachers generally believed that fathers and mothers demonstrate differing parenting skills but when it comes to parenting priorities, most

teachers (75%) identified fathers' parenting priorities to be at the same level of mothers'. However, research suggests that fathers have a unique parenting style which is assumed to be different from that of mothers (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2012). For example, fathers are likely to participate in physical and rough play (Ancell et al., 2016; Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, & Halle, 2004; Lamb, 2000). This has been further supported by the teachers in this thesis. Activities that encourage physical play (e.g., sports activities) are areas where fathers' unique skills (parenting style) can be utilised. This could be a stereotyped view that males are more involved in rough play than females which has implications for ECE. That is, lack of ECE male teachers (only 2% of ECE teachers are male in New Zealand reported by Farquhar, 2012) intensifies fathers' participation in ECE to bring a relative gender balance and help children engage in more physical and rough play with fathers which has been reported to positively affect young children's social competence (Jia, Kotila, & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2012; Ma et al., 2016).

Therefore, if ECE centres provide sports facilities (e.g., rugby balls, punching bags, etc.) and encourage fathers to spend a bit of time in the centre, fathers may engage with their children in the centre which in turn extends physical activities for the children in the centre from simply going for a walk in the nearby vicinity by ECE teachers every now and then – this is not to underestimate the current physical activities in ECE centres or stating that fathers are not engaged in physical activities with their children out of the centre but it is to suggest an alternative (strategy) to increase the chances of fathers' participation in the centre through physical/rough play.

If, as some have argued (Flippin & Crais, 2011; Varghese & Wachen, 2015), fathers use more complex language with children, such involvement in physical activities and rough play may also affect children's social competence and language, as in turn taking, explaining

rules of the play to other children, disputing over a score, etc. (Jia et al., 2012). Compared to mothers, fathers are believed to use “more complex language” (Varghese & Wachen, 2015, p. 27), with their children (see also Flippin & Crais, 2011). Examining differences between fathers’ and mothers’ quality and level of language with young children, it has been identified that language utilised by fathers and mothers varied in that mothers use more familiar words with children, whereas fathers use more varied language that helps to expand the child’s vocabulary (Pancsofar & Vernon-Feagans, 2010). It also goes further by arguing that fathers use more complex language that elicit more cognitively demanding language from children (Rowe et al., 2004). Fathers’ language with children also varies from mothers’ because fathers use more affirmations and action directives (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2012; Tamis-LeMonda, Shannon, Cabrera, & Lamb, 2004).

In conclusion, it can be suggested that once teachers are aware of their perceptions of fathers, they may be able to identify or increase their awareness of their biases which can be addressed in training (support) programmes so teachers could overcome their biases by learning how to adopt suitable strategies (Peterson, 2014). To further help teachers to find their potential biases or differences between their perceptions and those of fathers’ (i.e., what a teacher thinks would work to enhance fathers’ participation may not be considered by a father), comparing teachers’ perceptions with fathers’ perceptions in fathers’ participation in ECE seems necessary. Next section will explicate the perceptions of ECE teachers and fathers.

6.3.2 Teachers’ vs. Fathers’ Perceptions of Facilitators

Findings revealed that New Zealand ECE teachers are aware of the importance of fathers’ participation in ECE, in particular fathers’ roles in children’s educational and physical development. Fathers’ participation should improve paternal partnership required by

the New Zealand ECE curriculum, too. Since almost all ECE teachers (98%) are female in New Zealand (Farquhar, 2012), like many other parts of the world, encouragement of mothers' participation has attracted a lot of attention (Ancell et al., 2016; Green, 2003; Saracho & Spodek, 2008). However, research on fathers' participation is still needed. The findings of the current thesis, similar to other research, demonstrated that to facilitate fathers' participation, considerations should be given to fathers' perceptions, interests and comfort zone by inviting them to share their ideas with ECE teachers (Freeman et al., 2008; T. Kahn, 2006). The findings also revealed that fathers believed that ECE centres should adopt strategies to collect fathers' ideas when developing programmes to enhance fathers' participation in ECE centres. In other words, it seems necessary to consider the need for adopting suitable strategies which reflect fathers' features (such as perception, language, comfort zone, parenting style and priorities, etc.) to enhance interactions with fathers, and facilitate their participation in ECE centres.

The findings from the questionnaire suggest that many teachers seemed to be aware of fathers' comfort zone and father-friendly environment as influencing factors of fathers' participation consistent with international research (Ancell et al., 2016; Auld, 1999; Freeman et al., 2008). Comfort zone refers to the activities that consider fathers' needs and interests to help fathers feel comfortable when participate in ECE programmes, and father-friendly environment refers to the ECE environment that helps fathers engage in the centre and feel belonging. Hence, it is suggested that centres should put fliers on the centre's boards specifically targeting fathers, such as showing fathers doing activities with their children (Auld, 1999; McBride & Rane, 1997; Palm & Fagan, 2008). The questionnaire responses also suggest that most teachers appreciated that some programmes should be developed to engage fathers in the centre. Of course, this does not mean that mothers should be neglected, but it

could be argued that mothers are already engaged in ECE and that programmes that specifically target fathers are what is needed (see also Auld, 1999).

Considering father-friendly environment in ECE, gender balance in staffing has been suggested as a facilitator of fathers' participation in ECE centres according to the teachers. That is, teachers believed that the presence of more male staff in ECE centres may help fathers feel more comfortable when they are in the centre. The presence of male teachers in ECE centres as a facilitator of fathers' participation has also been reported previously (e.g., Jay Fagan & Palm, 2004; Farquhar, 2012). In contrast, Cooney and Bittner (2001) argued that parents do not support the presence of male teachers in ECE. It seems that teachers and parents perceive male staffing in ECE differently. The 2012 national survey of ECE teachers in New Zealand revealed that ECE teachers believe that parents would not support the employment of male teachers in ECE (Farquhar, 2012); the findings of the current thesis suggested that while ECE teachers believe that ECE male staffing would improve fathers' participation which can be interpreted as the need for recruiting male staff in ECE, fathers thought otherwise. Fathers did not see the presence of male ECE teachers encouraging their participation in ECE programmes. Additionally, teachers believed that employing male teachers should promote gender equality in and out of home. This has also gone further in studies arguing that male staffing in ECE may offer more equally shared parental responsibilities between mothers and fathers (Cameron, 2006).

It is believed that male teachers may empower children's physical skills and educational development differently from female teachers (Farquhar, 2012; Ihmeideh, 2014), with each gender potentially offering a different role model to the child (Osgood, 2009). Since ECE centres are generally female dominated (Green, 2003; Henderson & Mapp, 2002), children's exposure to a female role model would be greater within such contexts, and the

presence of male teachers would be assumed to expose children to more of a male role model. Research in New Zealand has argued that many children grow up with minimal modelling from a male due to the increase number of sole mothers (Farquhar, 2012), which some have argued may have negative consequences (see Cameron, 2006, and; Freeman et al., 2008, for a discussion of the consequences). Therefore, it could be argued that children's exposure to more male figures in ECE (either male teachers or fathers of the children attending the ECE centre) would help young children understand male and female perspectives equally; something that the current ECE environment lacks. Additionally, it could be argued that fathers' participation would be relatively more important than recruiting male ECE teachers, since male staff at ECE centres is something that has been viewed as controversial, both among parents and ECE teachers. For example, in the current thesis, male staffing at ECE centres was not supported by the participating fathers. However, further research is needed to determine the specific benefits of a gender balance in New Zealand ECE context and why recruiting male ECE teachers is supported by teachers but not by fathers.

Responses to the questionnaire also suggest that the majority of ECE teachers feel that getting to know fathers better will lead to improvements in fathers' participation in ECE. As mentioned earlier, discussing common biases in training (support) programmes for pre- and in-service teachers may help ECE teachers become aware of the differences between teachers' and fathers' perceptions – and therefore understand fathers' perspectives better. Indeed, teachers in this research considered collecting information about fathers and correspondence with fathers as facilitators of fathers' participation. The importance of contacting fathers has also been highlighted by Green (2003) and White et al., (2011) who suggest that even fathers who no longer live with their children (e.g., single-parent children) should be contacted to strengthen the partnership model. The current thesis also argues for

the importance of ECE centres contacting fathers. The argument here is that centres generally (and perhaps unintentionally) target mothers in their communication due to the stereotyped view that mothers are in charge of the care of young children (as discussed earlier). Hence, it is suggested that, where appropriate, ECE teachers and centres find ways to contact fathers specifically (e.g., direct emails to fathers) in addition to the contacts with mothers in order to improve fathers' participation.

In New Zealand, father-teacher partnerships (parent-teacher) are regulated by the national curriculum framework (Ministry of Education, 2015, 2017). In this partnership, ECE centres are encouraged to offer opportunities for parents (in this thesis fathers) to feel belonging so they participate in centres' programmes. While the teachers in this study are generally aware of the facilitating conditions such as considering comfort zone and father-friendly environment to encourage fathers' participation in ECE, fathers did not recognise such efforts are made by ECE teachers/centres (see Chapter 4). Additionally, what teachers believed as important has been perceived by fathers differently. For example, while teachers indicated that "conducting a survey of father's ideas and interests" could facilitate fathers' presence in centre, fathers believed that there is no need for such surveys. Again, such differing views between teachers and fathers (e.g., facilitating conditions) should be discussed in training (support) programmes to inform teachers about fathers' perceptions. Consistent with partnership model (J. Epstein, 2011) that expects teachers, as professionals, to work closely not only with children in ECE, but also with parents (in this context fathers), teachers are required to raise their awareness and learn strategies to work alongside fathers to provide a better learning environment for young children.

The importance of a father-friendly environment is another facilitator identified by teachers to enhance fathers' participation in ECE centres. Teachers recognised the need to

consider fathers' comfort zones in centres' programmes, a factor that may encourage fathers to feel comfortable and valued. Additionally, the recognition that fathers should be encouraged to have active roles in ECE is seen by teachers to support fathers' participation in ECE. From fathers' perspectives, it seems that fathers (about 60%) agreed with teachers that more encouragement is required for them to have active roles in ECE centres. However, fathers' perceptions seem relatively contradictory to those of teachers' in the importance of the influencing factors such as father-friendly environment and comfort zone in centres' programmes. Fathers seemed quite comfortable with the current ECE environment in New Zealand.

Additionally, fathers reported that they feel confident in their parenting skills. This can be interpreted as fathers perceive themselves as competent parents who are already involved in their children's education. However, fathers indicated that they would like to be valued for their roles more and be invited for their partnership in the ECE programmes. This can happen via being invited to educational events and/or being spoken to by teachers about their children's education. In line with other published studies, fathers seem very interested in being invited to ECE centres, and getting involved in the programmes designed specifically for them (Raikes & Bellotti, 2006; Turbiville & Marquis, 2001). Electronic innovations could be useful in encouraging fathers' participation (i.e., fathers may not be 'on the ground' but they could be asked for giving feedback and receiving information about their children's education in other ways).

The importance of culture and specific needs of communities were also identified by both teachers and fathers. Fathers in New Zealand are not a homogenous group (Callister & Fursman, 2013) thus their needs and interests may differ from one community to another depending on the local context. Hence, understanding different approaches are necessary in

various communities (Mitchell, Haggerty, et al., 2006; Mitchell, Wylie, et al., 2008).

Generally, it seems that fathers' language is different from that of mothers suggesting that fathers use more complex language (as discussed earlier) (Varghese & Wachen, 2015). This can be interpreted as fathers prefer a different language form (perhaps choice of words) when they are interacted with (this idea was represented by 50% of the respondents). This finding argues for the importance of 'language' (Campbell-Barr & Bogatic, 2017; Eraut, 2000) as an influencing factor of fathers' participation in ECE. Given that fathers are believed to use more complex language, perhaps fathers may feel more comfortable if teachers interact with them using the language that fathers are familiar with (i.e., using more affirmations and action directives (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2012)). It may also suggest that if teachers talk with fathers about a familiar topic, (e.g., initiating a conversation with fathers about their jobs), fathers may feel more welcomed in the centre. Such interactions between teachers and fathers should be used as a platform (making relationship) to encourage conversations about the child's day – a move away from the current practice in ECE which mostly sees mothers as the primary carer of the child who are usually talked to about the child's day in the centre.

Given that needs of various communities should be considered in their own context (Barker et al., 2004; Campbell-Barr & Bogatic, 2017; T. Kahn, 2006; Witte, 2015), the importance of language found in this thesis suggests that not only the context (i.e., culture and ethnicity) should be considered but language should be taken into account when interacting with fathers. Language is viewed as a verbal expression of culture (Campbell-Barr & Bogatic, 2017) which has also been reflected in cultural diversity in New Zealand; that is ECE teachers should be aware of cultural differences (though this is not limited to language). Therefore, it is suggested that ECE centres refer to their demographic information and use collective information about fathers to be aware of the cultural diversities in their centre before developing activities for fathers. Such information should help teachers develop

culturally appropriate programmes. Again, since New Zealand seems to be culturally diverse, it is suggested that each centre develops activities based on the communal or cultural needs of that centre. This is plausible since in the current practice of ECE in New Zealand, a few children (about 8) are allocated to one teacher as a key person. Hence, it is suggested that ECE teachers make themselves aware of the cultural aspects that the child and their father bring with themselves into the centre along with the complexity of the language known for father which can be used as a facilitator to enhance fathers' participation. Again, such interpretation should not be taken as questioning the current practice of ECE centres but to be seen as alternatives to target fathers more.

The role of language as a facilitator of fathers' participation in ECE can be further highlighted in paternal involvement, in particular as an indicator of responsibility. The concept of paternal involvement has highlighted three areas including engagement, accessibility and responsibility (Lamb, 1981, 2000; Pleck, 2007) (see more details in Chapter 2). The component of responsibility can be argued as the most important area of fathers' participation as it reflects the extent to which a father takes ultimate responsibility for his child's welfare and care. Responsibility does not necessarily require direct engagement with the child but includes making child care arrangements, ensuring that the child is safe, taking care of the child's education, and making arrangements for care and nurturance when the child is sick. Hence, a responsible father is someone who helps the child and cares for the child. In other words, responsibility also occurs when a father is interacting with someone related to the child's needs (e.g., ECE teacher) (Lamb, 2000). Hence, if using specific language or different choice of words (i.e. complex language) to talk with fathers encourages more interactions with fathers during drop-off and pick-up times and facilitates fathers' participation, it can be suggested that such interactions may develop a form of responsibility if they go beyond simply greetings and farewell and encourage more relevant interactions

about the child's day. As mentioned earlier, a responsible father is not only the father who engages with his child directly but a father who discusses his child's needs with other professionals/services (Hawkins et al., 2002; Lamb, 2000). In other words, talking to fathers about their interests (e.g., sports events, elections, their jobs, etc.) aiming to initiate a conversation which deliberately leads to a chat about the child's activities during the day should develop teacher-father interactions about the child which is considered as one of the factors of responsibility in paternal involvement (Lamb, 2000).

Overall, the results demonstrated that ECE teachers and fathers may have differing views on facilitators. That is, what teachers think may attract fathers is perceived relatively contradictory by fathers. Considering the principles of the partnership model which intensifies that both teachers and parents are professionals with varying focus of knowledge between ECE and home environments (Hornby, 2011), they should work together to enhance child development. Therefore raising awareness of such differences through training (support) programmes for teachers, as suggested by the participating teachers, should help teachers develop a fair understanding of fathers' perceptions informed by research. Although pre-service teachers are expected to be taught about the importance of partnership models (according to the New Zealand ECE curriculum) and working with parents and families, there is a lack of practical training in how to implement such partnership. Hence, practical placements that involve practice in partnership models would be beneficial. The development of skills that can be used to implement such partnerships is an important area for consideration by both education curriculum policy makers and teacher education programme designers.

6.3.3 Teachers vs. Fathers Perceptions of Barriers

Both teachers and fathers reported that fathers' working hours and schedule should be considered as barriers to fathers' participation. Fathers' time and work schedule have been considered as barriers in previous studies of paternal involvement in education (Carpenter & Towers, 2008; Freeman et al., 2008), too. Such barriers could affect father-teacher communications, fathers' spending time with their children, and fathers' participating in the centre's events. Based on the published research on fathers, most parental activities organised by ECE centres take place during business hours of the centres, which might be considered to coincide with fathers' working hours. Hence, it is suggested that ECE teachers encourage fathers' participation by arranging activities out of fathers' working hours (e.g., an evening event), or ask fathers about convenient times to increase chances of fathers' participation in the centre's programmes. This should show the importance of considering fathers' needs before developing programmes. ECE centres may encourage fathers' participation if ECE teachers think of fathers' needs before arranging activities and making decisions for fathers' participation.

Considering the change in family/societal structures that has led to an increase of the number of women in the work force, it is crucial to ask why mothers' work schedule does not influence their presence and participation in ECE programmes to the same extent as it does fathers. That is, why mothers are still seen more in ECE. This might be related to working hours and responsibilities, or the type of jobs that mothers do (Cameron, 2006). In other words, the presence of working mothers in ECE might be rooted in gender preferences in the work place (Cameron, 2006; Owen, 2003). Mothers prefer jobs that allow them to interact with their child's education. They are attracted to jobs that provide them with the flexibility/opportunity to spend more time with their young children. Hence women's work

types and schedules may not have the same impact on their participation in ECE. This in turn may influence such a stereotyped view (as mirrored in the ECE teachers' perceptions in this study) which considers mothers more caring than fathers. Again, whether ECE teachers divide care and education from each other needs to be addressed. However, it should be highlighted that the ECE curriculum in New Zealand combines education and care. This is why the term for the service is Early Childhood Education (ECE) in New Zealand; this is divergent from the similar service internationally which divides care and education from each other and names the service Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) (Duncan et al., 2012; May, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2017).

Another possible interpretation for the participation of working mothers (which is not generally the case for fathers) in ECE could be due to the stereotyped view that mothers/females are usually considered as primary care givers for young children (Aslanian, 2015; Owen, 2003). That is, mothers/females are viewed as caring, sensitive and nurturing figures. Given that policy approaches, women and children's rights, and family structures in regards to gender roles have been changed in the 21st Century (Cameron, 2006; Osgood, 2009), equality of mothers' and fathers' responsibilities in their young children's education and care has been emphasised. However, equality in gender role in ECE is still open to challenge; that is, since mothers (even working mothers) are seen in ECE centres more than fathers (indicating that mothers already participate in ECE), does it mean that young child's responsibility in ECE is by default mother's (other areas were not the focus of this thesis)? Does it mean that mothers are still considered as the primary caregivers of young children in the 21st century? In other words, if mothers are willing to be considered as caregivers and fathers to be breadwinners even though both work and contribute to the household financially, then it can be interpreted as mothers' working hours are deliberately scheduled around the hours that the child attends ECE which does not negatively influence mothers'

participation and makes mothers more visible in ECE. Consequently, it is very common to see a mother stops in the centre and talks to the teachers about the child's day, attends programmes in the centre, etc. However, given that both gender roles in the work force and gender stereotypes in family relations are debated internationally, further studies are required to shed light on why mothers' participation in ECE is seen but this is not generally the case for fathers.

While fathers have been reported to fear in their parenting skills (also reported as a barrier) in paternal research literature (e.g., Ihmeideh, 2014; McBride & Rane, 1997; J. M. White et al., 2011), this barrier was not identified by the participating ECE teachers and fathers in this thesis. Fathers are seen competent parents by both teachers and fathers themselves; fathers also identified themselves confident in taking care of their young children. This can be further interpreted as New Zealand fathers may participate in their children's care and educational development already but are not seen in ECE centres; the area that is suggested to be further extended in future research.

6.3.4 Developing Father-Focused Programmes

The partnership model highlights the shared responsibilities of schools (ECE centres in this context) and families as a set of overlapping spheres of influence that alter the interactions of parents, teachers, children and the wider community (J. Epstein, 2011). This model recognises that there are some practices that schools and families conduct separately but that there are other practices that should be conducted as partners. The literature (J. Epstein et al., 2002) suggests that most schools or ECE centres leave it up to families to decide whether, and how, to participate in their children's education. Whether this strategy is optimal is questionable, however. Although it does allow decisions to be based on parental interest and availability, it requires of the parent an understanding of what might be useful

and what might not in terms of their participation. When viewing this from the perspective of their child's education, many parents may have a restricted level of understanding of what might be a useful level of participation. This can, potentially, lead to the parent leaving the learning side of interactions to the ECE teacher (the perceived expert) and making most interactions focused around picking-up and dropping-off – the behaviour that they perceive as most useful most of the time. For additional areas of interactions to be available to parents, ECE teachers may have to work more closely with parents in order to provide opportunities that can be perceived by the parent as of benefit to the child – and this may be particularly important if interactions between parent and teacher are to go beyond basic social interactions (such as saying hello at drop-off). This is not to indicate that such basic social interactions are unimportant (they clearly are and can be the basis of further interactions). Rather, the point here is that more may be needed to move beyond this and develop interactions between parent and teacher that relate to the work of ECE centres, and that are seen by parents as valuable for their child's education and, therefore, worth the time and effort needed for their continuance (Lamb, 2000; Varghese & Wachen, 2015). Therefore, developing programmes that encourage beneficial/effective involvement of parents (in this context fathers) would be useful, particularly if such programmes consider the facilitators and barriers of fathers' participation, and if research is available that has examined the success of such programmes. This was the general aim of the third study in this thesis.

As mentioned earlier, facilitators of fathers' participation in ECE centres are likely to revolve around fathers' perceived needs/requirements (such as fitting with work patterns), ensuring that there is an obvious value to their participation (this should be clear to the fathers themselves) and should be within the comfort zone of the fathers (i.e., it should not be seen by them as something that they will find difficult to perform). The current thesis examined if a programme focused on these facilitators can encourage fathers' participation in the work of

ECE centres. Study 3 involved a book club activity designed to meet the potential requirements outlined above, and determining the influence of the activity on fathers' participation in the ECE centres. To this end, the book club activity was organised to fit with the fathers' time schedule, so that fathers could participate in the centre's work at a time convenient to them. Based on this, fathers were asked to volunteer to be involved in reading activities with their child at the ECE centre. These reading activities were selected (based on the relevant literature: see Varghese & Wachen, 2015) so that they would be unlikely to be seen as too difficult by most fathers but would give most fathers a feeling of taking part in something of value in their children's education (i.e., an improvement in their child's literacy skills).

The data reported in this thesis indicated that such a father-focused programme does have the potential to change patterns of father-teacher interactions and to increase fathers' participation in ECE centres. The findings also suggested changes in the types of behaviours/interaction that fathers showed with their children during the shared book reading sessions. These findings could be considered as a positive change at the ECE centre (J. Epstein, 2011). The fathers' presence and the frequency of their contacts with centres increased in the book-club group more than that of the comparison group, suggesting improvements in fathers' participation in ECE. Fathers were observed initiating conversations with ECE teachers about the education of their child, which may be indicative of them more actively contributing to the educational development of their children in the centre. The fact that such interactions with ECE teachers occurred within the centre suggests that fathers may now better perceive the centre as a convenient place to interact with their child's ECE teacher. Interactions being valued by both teachers and parents would also likely increase the chance of maintenance of such behaviours – though further research is necessary to observe changes and maintenance over time, and determine the type of positive feedback

from ECE teachers that will maintain interactions from fathers. This may be related to the current data on language use. It may, for example, be necessary for ECE teachers to use the right language with fathers to maintain involvement in a programme and interactions with teachers. Discussions about their child's learning in terms familiar to the father would be an obvious focus: e.g., avoiding technical jargon about literacy such as 'your child's print awareness/orthographic knowledge/phonological processing is improving' and focusing more on concrete and clear examples, such as an example where the child recognises a specific book title. Additional conversations could revolve around the type of reading materials that might be useful when reading to their child, for example, which might then fit with the work of the centre and be a source of discussion of the work of the centre; linking the work of the centre with the input of the father would be a clear way of showing the value placed on the fathers' participation. Strategies for putting such information in a positive way that is relevant to the father would clearly be useful.

In addition to changes in interactions with teachers, changes were also observed in fathers' reading behaviour during the shared reading sessions with their children. Specifically, fathers more frequently demonstrated behaviours that supported their children's book/print knowledge and language development. These positive improvements are encouraging as they show that a relatively simple father-focussed programme can lead to enhanced interactions from fathers and demonstrable improvements in children language and literacy. The latter improvements are likely to be recognised by the fathers themselves, and such positive feedback from involvement in the reading sessions should increase the chance of maintenance. Again, further research is necessary but the combination of positive interactions with ECE teachers and recognisable improvements in their child's language and literacy would be likely to lead to increased involvement over time. Again, such recognisable positive improvements could be the focus of interactions between ECE teachers and fathers:

‘what changes in your child have you noticed during the book club’, ‘how do you think this can be enhanced further’, etc. The parents would be likely to perceive improvements but an ECE teacher may also recognise improvements in the child’s language and/or literacy levels because the involvement of a parent at the centre would also be a focus of discussion and encouragement. Again, language will be vital here – the ECE teacher will need to present this in a form that is clear and understandable but does not seem like ‘talking down’ to the father: a simple ‘well done’ on its own is unlikely to be helpful in the context of producing valuable interactions. One possible way would be to present improvements in literacy based on a simple measure, such as that used in the current study. A discussion of the data, maybe in the form of a graph or percentage improvement that is clear to both teacher and parent, and that covers what the data mean for the child’s educational development, would be both relevant to the father and show interest by the teacher in what the father is doing. Again, further work to develop successful strategies that can be implemented by a range of ECE teachers would be useful but the current study argues for the potential positive advantages of such work.

The effectiveness of the father-focused programme implemented in this study (Daddy Book Club programme) may have been, in part, due to the consideration of the barriers of paternal participation (as discussed earlier): for example, the programme was implemented at a time that was agreed with fathers, considering their work schedule and the time they were comfortable to come to the ECE centre. This feature of the programme is in line with the partnership model (J. Epstein, 2011): educator and parent working together to find appropriate solutions. The focus on an educational issue in the programme is also consistent with what Hornby (2011) suggests as a consideration of parents as professionals who should work with teachers to support child’s educational development. However, the design of the programme also took into consideration the fathers’ comfort zone. The implementation of the programme was discussed with fathers in an interactive way (again consistent with the

partnership model) to help fathers feel comfortable about what they were going to do and why. Additionally, the programme was designed to make fathers feel valued in terms of their children's education since it was expected to positively influence their child's educational attainment. The work indicated that an awareness and acknowledgment of the needs of fathers provides an opportunity to develop programmes to attract fathers to spend more time in the centre guided by the collaborative approach.

Despite the positive evidence for the programme used in Study 3, there are still factors that may need to be taken into account to further enhance fathers' participation in ECE programmes. Other research has examined the usefulness of programmes to increase paternal engagement (Green & Cooper, 2008; Raikes & Bellotti, 2006). It has also been revealed that parent education (father education), paternal unique words, and daily child-father interaction (shared reading) may influence child's language, child-father relationships and fathers' perceptions of the benefits of their participation in their children's education (Green & Cooper, 2008; Pancsofar & Vernon-Feagans, 2010). The findings of Study 3 also indicated a positive relationship between fathers' participation and children's language outcome. The findings also extends fathers' home participation in the child's literacy and rearing to the ECE centre environment, and sheds light on how fathers' activity can influence father-teacher interactions.

An additional factor is that ECE teachers are likely to need appropriate training to develop and use appropriately a range of father-focused strategies, as well as the time and resources to work with the parent and organise such programmes. Examples of such programmes could be incorporated into ECE teacher training (or professional development) programmes so that the implemented programme fits with the context of the work and the needs of the individuals involved. A set of potential programmes would reduce the time

needed for the ECE teacher to develop a programme. This would also highlight the need to consider the background of the parent and child. For example, the current literacy-focused programme may not be appropriate for very young children or fathers with difficulties with reading. Alternative strategies may then focus more on developing language through verbal interactions, such as story-telling. A story-telling programme may also fit with cultural backgrounds of some fathers, which may also provide a sense that their heritage is been considered in the work of the centre; again, a further point for positive interactions between teachers and fathers. Discussions with fathers about the type of activities that they feel comfortable with will be necessary; and, again, ECE teachers with the background knowledge and training to lead these discussions would more likely lead to success. Appropriate training in what to expect, and how to deal with different situations, is likely to make the implementation of such strategies easier for the ECE teacher and increase the chance of the programme's effectiveness. The current data indicated positive effects related to fathers and children but these data are based on fathers who have volunteered to take part, and hence the focus of the project was related to the background of these fathers. Finding a fit between a programme aimed at increasing participation and factors that may make the father more or less likely to agree to participate in the programme will require further work. Clearly, many of these potential additional factors that will influence participation could not be covered in the confines of the current PhD research. However, the current data, along with previous research (e.g., the shared-book reading programme for better father-child interactions proposed by Green and Cooper (2008) and the empowerment-based parent education programme for fathers proposed by Fagan & Stevenson (2002) which aimed to train fathers to improve their perceptions about their ability to teach their children), should provide a basis on which to further develop such strategies.

6.4 Practical Implications

The findings of the current thesis suggested some potential practical approaches to improve partnerships between ECE teachers, fathers and families. Findings suggested that encouragement is a crucial consideration for effective fathers' participation. When working with fathers, it is important to consider how fathers may feel comfortable about being conversed with. Considering language and word choice, it is suggested that ECE teachers utilise strategies to initiate conversations with fathers related to their jobs or interests to make fathers feel belonging and comfortable in centres. Since ECE teachers are mostly females (98%), it is important for teachers to be aware that the language utilised by fathers and mothers are varied. Fathers' tend to use more affirmations and action directives (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2012). Hence, it is suggested that ECE teachers try to approach fathers using the language that fathers are comfortable with in order to increase interactions with fathers about their child. Such interactions are supposed to increase not only the sense of belonging for the father to his child's ECE centre but the responsibility of the father when he is in charge of queries about his child's day in the centre.

Additionally, it is important to utilise fathers' roles both directly and indirectly to increase their participation in ECE programmes. Given that the importance of fathers' role in young children's development has been identified by both teachers and fathers, it is suggested that centres and ECE teachers directly give responsibilities to fathers. For example, available fathers can be asked to come over to the centre to lead some programmes (educational or physical programmes). Fathers can also be directly get involved by asking their collective thoughts to develop programmes for the centre. Another useful practical implication derived from the findings of the current thesis suggests that ECE teachers should work with mothers to utilise their role in promoting fathers' participation. Given that the role of mothers in

fathers' participation in ECE has been recognised internationally, mothers should become aware of their role as an influencing factor through practical workshops run by the centre for mothers. Mothers can be asked to put fathers in charge of queries made about the child from the centre.

Recognising and managing teachers' biases should also be considered. While teachers may perceive their knowledge, skills, and abilities sufficient to work with fathers, the findings of the current thesis suggested that ECE teachers should set aside their biases and embrace a number of strategies to support fathers' participation in ECE programmes. As an example, the teachers in this study seemed to have a tendency towards mothers in ECE, or they believed that male ECE teachers should be recruited to enhance fathers' participation. Teachers should be aware of the common biases in their field and also be informed about the potential ways to make free-biased decisions. This highlights the importance of modifying the current ECE training (support) programmes to explicitly discuss teachers' biases, influencing factors of fathers' participation, and strategies to enhance fathers' participation in ECE.

The findings of the current thesis may also inform ECE centre managers and programme developers to make decisions and prepare programmes to accommodate fathers' comfort zone and interests. For example, when planning activities, centres should develop activities specifically planned for fathers considering their interests, work time schedule, comfort zone, etc. which can be varied from centre to centre. This is also reflected in cultural diversity in New Zealand; the teachers are aware of cultural differences in New Zealand believing that centres should consider their demographic information and cultural norms when developing programmes to ensure that programmes are culturally appropriate for parents. Such a practical implication should increase father-teacher partnerships. Such

programmes should offer flexibility in timing (e.g., evening or weekend events) which is convenient for fathers (and also mothers) to attend. Professional developments for ECE teachers practicing collaborative approaches for resilient relationships with fathers should be taken into account, too.

6.5 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The studies reported in this thesis were aimed at investigating fathers' participation in ECE centres in New Zealand. To this end, the perceptions of teachers and fathers were sought without including mothers' perceptions. To get a better understanding about fathers' participation, it is recommended to ask mothers' perceptions as well. Family factors such as mothers' perceptions, mothers' employment and mother–father relationships are also related to fathers' level of participation. Additionally, mothers need to be involved in the development of initiatives designed to encourage fathers' participation. Teachers need to be made aware of mothers' role in fathers' participation when developing fathers' activities. Centres should also consider mothers' roles whose efforts may enhance fathers' participations. When centres develop initiatives to encourage fathers' participation, they should acknowledge the strengths of fathers and also the needs of fathers. In other words, to get a better picture of partnership (see Epstein's model (2011)), understanding fathers, mothers and ECE teachers' perspectives are essential for positive parent-teacher partnerships. Therefore, mothers' perceptions should be considered in future studies to further delve into the similarities and differences among teachers', fathers' and mothers' perceptions in this regard. A comparison between fathers', teachers' and mothers' views is also important to shed light on the similarities and differences of their perceptions which should help to identify the areas that they are happy to work with each other. Such a comparison would also help to identify the areas that fathers, teachers and mothers think differently and need further

support to find potentials so they can work alongside with each other to enhance fathers' participation in ECE.

Second, this study delved into the perceptions of teachers and fathers utilising a survey. While using a reliable questionnaire strengthened the study by attracting about 150 participants (100 teachers and 50 fathers) across New Zealand, conferencing with teachers and fathers (in a qualitative research design) could have also provided a more in-depth understanding of fathers' perceptions considering feelings of the respondents when responding to the addressed areas rather than simply answering a question in a Likert scale from disagreeing to agreeing with an item – interview data may have encouraged participants to interpret their answers. Hence gathering comprehensive information via open-ended interviews in a qualitative research design may allow more in-depth understanding of the factors that may facilitate or hinder fathers' participation in ECE programmes.

The data gathered for the present thesis were based on the surveys from teachers and fathers regarding fathers' role in ECE centres. No direct information was gathered beyond fathers' role. One of the recommendation to capture more in-depth data is the use of a mixed method research design including both quantitative data (e.g. from surveys) and qualitative data (e.g. from interviews/observations) in a single study. A mixed method research is believed to aim at building on the cooperation and strength of both quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand a phenomenon more comprehensively than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). Obviously, a mixed method approach is usually conducive to understanding research settings both broadly (i.e., from quantitative data) and deeply (i.e. from qualitative data). In addition, the in-depth and detailed qualitative data obtained from follow-up interviews/observations with participants (teachers and fathers) may partly remedy the

possible effects of the response set (i.e. the tendency of an individual to select more socially-accepted responses) existing in self-report instruments.

Third, the intervention implemented in this thesis (Study 3) was only targeting fathers in ECE environment and was limited to an emergent literacy programme. Developing an approach to enhance teachers' and fathers' practice in the centre is crucial for consideration in future studies. Perhaps developing a number of father-focused programmes (such as sports, cooking, music activities, etc.) and comparing them with one another could bring more insights about the nature of such programmes to enhance fathers' participation in ECE programmes. Additionally, due to the sample size in Study 3, the data should be treated cautiously. Further studies with more participants are required to further shed light into this area.

Finally, teachers' biases should be interpreted cautiously since fathers' roles in parental participation or fathers' interests in their children's educational development may be underestimated when fathers' lack of physical presence in the ECE centres is interpreted as the fathers need encouragement in participating in their children's early years' education (i.e., their presence in ECE centres without considering what is happening at the home context may lead to a deficit view or teachers' bias). Many fathers (and mothers actually) are not involved in drop offs and pick-ups or other activities in ECE centres (i.e., they may not be seen in the centre much) but they are very involved parents in their young children's education and care. The real issue is probably a biased perspective of ECE teachers who may equalize the unseen father in the ECE centre as a father who needs encouragement (unlike mothers) in participating in their young children's education which further limits fathers' participation. This should be considered as the limitation of the current thesis, and should be further disentangled in future research.

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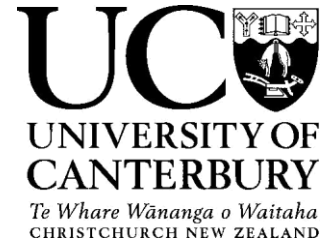
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Appendix 1

Ethics Approval Letter



HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Lynda Griffioen
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Ref: 2014/61/ERHEC

17 December 2014

Parisa Soleimani Tadi
School of Sport & Physical Education
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Parisa

Thank you for providing the revised documents in support of your application to the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. I am very pleased to inform you that your research proposal "An investigation of teachers' perceptions of fathers' participation in early childhood education" has been granted ethical approval.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 16 December 2014.

Should circumstances relevant to this current application change you are required to reapply for ethical approval.

If you have any questions regarding this approval, please let me know.

We wish you well for your research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Griffiths', written over a light blue rectangular stamp.

Nicola Surtees
Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

“Please note that Ethical Approval and/or Clearance relates only to the ethical elements of the relationship between the researcher, research participants and other stakeholders. The granting of approval or clearance by the Ethical Clearance Committee should not be interpreted as comment on the methodology, legality, value or any other matters relating to this research.”

F E S

Appendix 2

Ethics Approval Letter



HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Rebecca Robinson
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Ref: 2015/47/ERHEC

19 February 2016

Parisa Soleimani Tadi
School of Teacher Education
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Parisa

Thank you for providing the revised documents in support of your application to the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. I am very pleased to inform you that your research proposal “An investigation of teachers' perceptions of fathers' participation in early childhood education” has been granted ethical approval, ***on the condition that you make the following change:***

On one part of the application (Information sheet to the Centre manager and Father), it notes information will be kept for 10 years before being destroyed, elsewhere (consent forms), it states 5 years. Please can you make this consistent.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 10th February 2016, as well as the amendment requested in this letter.

Should circumstances relevant to this current application change you are required to reapply for ethical approval.

If you have any questions regarding this approval, please let me know.

We wish you well for your research.

R. Robinson

Yours sincerely

Patrick Shepherd

Chair

Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

“Please note that ethical approval relates only to the ethical elements of the relationship between the researcher, research participants and other stakeholders. The granting of approval by the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee should not be interpreted as comment on the methodology, legality, value or any other matters relating to this research.”

Appendix 3

Example of Information Sheet

College of Education

School of Teacher Education

Tel: +64 3 364 2987 Ext. 43226

Email: parisa.soleimanitadi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz



Date:

Information Sheet for Father

I am Parisa Soleimani Tadi a PhD candidate at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, under the supervision of Professor John Everatt, Dr Brigid McNeill and Professor Garry Hornby. I have also been a teacher and a coordinator of an education programme within the early childhood education and care system for several years. I am currently planning to explore the effectiveness of implementing an emergent literacy intervention, targeting at fathers to facilitate father's participation in in Early Childhood Education (ECE) for my doctoral programme.

The current project's aim at providing an intervention programme targeting at fathers to encourage and facilitate father's participation in ECE centres. I am looking to work with fathers and their children, who regularly attend the centre for my research. I have discussed my research programme with the centre manager, and he/she has agreed to distribute this letter to fathers of children who fit into our selection criteria. The centre manager has also approved recruitment of fathers and their children from the centre.

I would like to invite you in my study, which will be an intervention programme (i.e. a book club) where I will share with fathers effective ways to enhance the shared reading interactions that you have with your preschool aged children. If you agree to do participate in the study:

- A snapshot of your shared book reading with your child will be observed for 10 minutes twice; at the beginning and following up participation in the book club.
- You will be involved in a four sessions programme focusing on the language and literacy development of your children. Each session the 1 hour programme will have a different skill focus.

I will also approach you for your consent to invite your child in my study, which will be a reading observation and assessing his/ her language and literacy skills. I encourage you to talk with your child about the study and assist him/her in making an informed decision in relation to his/her participation in this study. The child's consent for participation will also be obtained. If you agree to your child participate in this study:

- Your child language and literacy skills will be assessed by one appropriate assessment twice; at the beginning and following up participation in the book club. The assessment will take approximately 30 minutes each time.

The early literacy assessment will comprise one measure that was designed by Marie Clay (1989; Concept about Print). This task has been used widely in New Zealand and other countries to assess preschool children's understanding of print as well as their letter knowledge. I will try to assess your child knowledge of print, letter and sound by using these simple and well known tasks.

The reading observation and intervention will take place in the centre (name of the centre) at the time that suits you, your child and the centre best. In case you and/or your child feel stressed or uncomfortable during the reading observation, you may choose to stop this procedure at any time you want.

The assessments will take place so it suits your child best. In case you and/or your child feel stressed or uncomfortable during the assessing, you may choose to stop this procedure at any time you want.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary. If you participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty on prior permission. If you withdraw, I will do my best to remove any information relating to you if this is practically possible.

I will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. I will also take care to ensure your anonymity in publications of the findings. Neither your name nor your child name will be published in any thesis or report resulting from this study; pseudonyms will be used to maintain the anonymity of participants.

I will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your and your child's identity in publications of the findings. Access to the data will be limited to my supervisory team and me. All data will be locked in a cabinet when it is not being used. Data will be kept at the University of Canterbury for ten years following the study and will then be destroyed.

The results of this study will be used for my thesis which is publicly available through UC library, presented in national and international conferences and published in journals. A short report of the study with a summary of the results will be emailed to all participants at the end of the study in December 2016.

The University of Canterbury Educational Human Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study. Should you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research project is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the committee on:

Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch
Tel: +64 3 364 2987 ext: 45588

Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz.

I would be happy to clarify any queries you may have in relation to this research. Should you wish to contact me through email at parisa.soleimanitadi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz or my number is (03-3642987 ext. 43226) and my supervisor, Professor John Everatt at john.everatt@canterbury.ac.nz.

If you decide to participate, please read and complete the consent form attached and return to me in the envelope provided or e-mail me at parisa.soleimanitadi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz by **31 March, 2016**.

Yours sincerely,
Parisa Soleimani Tadi

Appendix 4

Example of Consent Letter

College of Education

School of Teacher Education
Tel: +64 3 364 2987 Ext. 43226
Email: parisa.soleimanitadi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz



Date:

Consent Information for Father

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research and have been given an opportunity to ask questions about this research project.
- ☐ I don't have to participate in this study and I am free to withdraw myself from the project without any disadvantage to me now or in the future.
- ☐ Myself and/or my child/children don't have to participate in this study and I am free to withdraw myself, and my child/children from the project without any disadvantage now or in the future.
- ☐ I understand that Parisa will conduct her research at (name of the centre) for a period of up to four-eight days in 2016. Myself and/or my child/children understand what will be required of me if I agree to take part in this project.
- ☐ I understand that the reading observation and intervention will take place at (name of the centre) and at the time that suits myself, my child/children and the centre best.
- ☐ Myself and/or my child/children can ask that observation and assessing of my child can be stopped temporarily or permanently at any time.
- ☐ I understand that all the data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. It will then be destroyed.
- ☐ I understand that any information or opinions that teachers, fathers, children and their parents provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that excerpt from the observation and written records would be used in publications and conference presentations relating to this project, without identifying details.
- ☐ I understand that this project involves four teaching sessions. In the event that the sessions develop in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I can decline to attend and may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage.

- ☐ I understand that no participants will have their names revealed by the researcher. Agreed substitute names will be used.
- ☐ Only Parisa, as primary researcher will have access to any personal identifying details of the participants and centres in this study, and these will be destroyed at the completion of the study.
- ☐ I give consent to Parisa to notify the Head teacher of the centre if my child discloses any information causing concern for the safety of my child.
- ☐ I have discussed the project with my child and s/he has had the information form read to him/her.
- ☐ I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study and may contact Parisa at any stage to receive copies of articles or publications based on the study. I have provided my email details below for this.
- ☐ I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Parisa Soleimani Tadi (parisa.soleimanitadi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz) or her supervisor, Professor John Everatt at (john.everatt@canterbury.ac.nz). If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

By signing below,

I agree to participate in this research project.

Yes/No

I agree to allow my child/children to participate in this project.

Yes/No

Name: _____

Child/children's name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Email address: _____

Appendix 5

Example of Information Letter (Children)

College of Education

School of Teacher Education
Tel: +64 3 364 2987 Ext. 43226
Email: parisa.soleimanitadi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz



Date:

Information Sheet for Children (for the parents to read to the children)

I am Parisa Soleimani Tadi doing a project at University of Canterbury. The project name is the effectiveness of implementing an emergent literacy intervention, targeting at fathers to facilitate father's participation in in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Your Mum and Dad are going to help you in my project.

I will video recording you and your Dad two times, while you are reading a book together. During this time, everything will be just same as your normal reading time with your Dad. I will not talk to or ask any questions from you or your Dad. After reading session finished, I will show you some books with pictures and we will chat about them. Then the project will be finished.

Your Mum and Dad has also been asked to help you. If you have any questions, you can talk to your Mum or Dad or to me. If you feel uncomfortable during the video recording or book chatting, you can ask your Mum or Dad or me to stop it. If you change your mind about being in the project, that's fine, too. All you have to do is just to tell your Mum or Dad or me.

Thank you for helping with the project.

Yours sincerely,
Parisa Soleimani Tadi

Appendix 6

Teacher's Questionnaire

University of Canterbury

Father Participation Questionnaire



Dear Participant,

My name is Parisa S. Tadi; I am currently doing my PhD programme in Early Childhood Education (ECE) at the College of Education in the University of Canterbury. For my doctoral research project I am investigating various aspects of father/ male caregivers' participation in early childhood education services. I am particularly interested to get a better insight of the relationship between father/ male caregivers and early childhood teachers; and it can be improved to the benefit of ECE.

Contact Details

If you have any questions or concerns about this study you can contact me, or my supervisor.

I have provided you our contact details as below:

Parisa Soleimani Tadi: Mobile: +64 (0) 224163511,

Email: parisa.soleimanitadi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Professor Garry Hornby: Email: garry.hornby@canterbury.ac.nz

Confidentiality and Agreement to Participate

Your confidentiality is guaranteed. You will not be asked to provide your name or address or any information that will identify who you are. The information you provide will be stored on a password-protected computer and questionnaires will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. Data will be destroyed after five years. Participation is a completely voluntary process and you can stop responding at any time, whether you have completed the survey or not. There is no penalty of any kind.

There are seven sections in this survey with each section being marked.

NOTE: The survey should take a short while (about 10-15 minutes) to complete.

If you miss a question, a message will prompt you to respond.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions and have these answered to my satisfaction. By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project based on the understandings above.

☐ I consent to participate in the survey.

I. Your answers to the first section will enable us to build profiles of the staff who participate in our survey.

1. What is your position in the centre?

- ☐ Centre manager
- ☐ Centre supervisor
- ☐ Head teacher
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Relief teacher
- ☐ Student teacher

2. What type of centre are you working in?

- ☐ Corporate
- ☐ Individual owner
- ☐ Community based
- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ Playcentre

3. Which New Zealand Region do you work in?

- ☐ North region
- ☐ South region

4. How many hours do you work per week?

- ☐ Less than 20 hours
- ☐ Between 20-30 hours
- ☐ More than 30 hours

5. How long have you worked in early childhood services?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

6. How long have you worked at your current centre?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

7. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

8. What is your ethnicity? Please indicate the cultural or ethnic group(s) with which you identify.

- ☐ European/Pākehā or New Zealand European
- ☐ New Zealand Māori, Tribal
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Cook Island Māori
- ☐ Tongan
- ☐ Niuean
- ☐ Tokelauan
- ☐ Chinese

- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Fijian
- ☐ Other Pacific Island (Please specify) _____
- ☐ Other Asian (Please specify) _____
- ☐ Other (Please specify) _____

9. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 20
- ☐ Between 20-30
- ☐ Between 31-40
- ☐ Above 40

10. What is your level of education? Please indicate your field of study in the box.

- ☐ Certificate
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor Degree
- ☐ Graduate Diploma
- ☐ Higher Degree _____

11. Have you had specific professional development regarding working with parents? If yes, please provide an example.

- ☐ Yes _____
- ☐ No

- II. Your answers to this section will be used to build a picture of current father participation in early childhood education in your centre. Please rate the following statements on the scale.

How would you describe your centre's current work with fathers?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fathers regularly come into the centre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers only come for events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers only drop-off and pick-up their children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are involved in events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are given responsibilities for events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers organize a group within the centre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers' pictures can be seen in their children's portfolios.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are encouraged to come early and play with their children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are spoken to during drop-off and pick-up times.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers ask questions about their children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers appear interested in participating in their children's education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

III. We would like to find out about your views of father participation in early childhood education services. Please rate the following statements on the scale provided.

What are your own beliefs concerning father participation in early childhood education?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Working alongside fathers is a positive aspect of my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parenting is less of a priority for fathers than for mothers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers have the confidence to ask questions about their child.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are teachers too.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are important for their children's education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers play a central role in the child's personality development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers have a different parenting style that develops children's skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are interested in participating in their children's education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are more likely to participate in physical activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers' presence in the centre develops girls' risk taking skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Children enjoy spending time with their fathers in the centre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boys are more likely to spend time with their fathers in the centre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1. Think of a typical week. About how many times do you see fathers/ male caregivers?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-2times
- ☐ 3-5 times
- ☐ More than 5 times

2. How satisfied are you with this situation?

- ☐ Very Dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Very Satisfied

3. Think of a typical week. About how many times have you communicated with fathers/ male caregivers?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-2 times
- ☐ 3-5 times
- ☐ More than 5 times

4. How satisfied are you with this situation?

- ☐ Very Dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Very Satisfied

5. Think of a typical week. About how many individual fathers/male caregivers have you communicated with?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-2 fathers
- ☐ 3-5 fathers
- ☐ More than 5 fathers

6. How satisfied are you with this situation?

- ☐ Very Dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Very Satisfied

IV. We want to find out about what you consider to be the barriers and limitations of father participation in early childhood education services. Please rate the following statements on the scale provided.

What are the factors that hinder your work with fathers?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teacher's attitudes to father participation in the centre's programmes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of male staff in early childhood centre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is generally easier for early childhood teachers to communicate with mothers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Different choice of words is required when interacting with fathers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers lack confidence in the fathers' ability to parenting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mothers' attitudes towards father parenting skill.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mothers care more deeply about their children's education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mothers are naturally more sensitive caregivers than are fathers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers' time schedules impacts on the communication between you and them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers lack confidence in their own parenting skill.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are able to enjoy children more when the children are older and don't require so much care.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Father's marital satisfaction affects their participation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are afraid to expose inadequacies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers are afraid of being falsely accused of child abuse.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fathers' participation levels are influenced by cultural / ethnic variables.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- V. We would now like to find out about what you describe as facilitators to father participation in early childhood education services. Please rate the following statements on the scale provided.

What are the factors that help you to work with fathers?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Providing adequate training for working with fathers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing the presence of male staff in the center.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing the presence of male students on placement in the centre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Male teacher demonstrating to fathers how to interact and behave with children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offering activities within a fathers' comfort zone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning activities for fathers based on their interests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding that different approaches are necessary in different communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being aware of cultural differences with different groups of fathers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inviting fathers to the centre separately.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encouraging fathers to take active roles in ECE.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking fathers for help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting into a routine schedule with fathers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The centre's environment reflects fathers' interests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

VI. The next section is about what you desire for father participation in the future. Please rate the following statements on the scale provided.

What are the issues that could enhance your work with fathers?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Sending written correspondence to fathers even if they live apart from their children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaving a space on the enrollment form for the fathers' personal information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inviting fathers to the centre to participate in educational activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training female teachers and staff to encourage male participation in the centre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing professional development and support services related to teacher-father relationship for teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collecting information about fathers, especially nonresidential fathers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing flexible programmes for fathers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating a father-friendly environment for fathers in the centre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Holding parent-teacher conferences especially for fathers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advertising special days at convenient times for fathers to come, share ideas and help the centre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Matching up new fathers with current participant fathers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conducting a survey of fathers' ideas and interests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is there anything you'd like to add about your experience with fathers in your centre?

Thank you for completing the survey. Your answers are greatly appreciated.

If you would like a summary of the research please provide your email address in the box below.

Appendix 7

Father's Questionnaire

University of Canterbury

Father Participation Questionnaire



Dear Participant,

My name is Parisa S. Tadi; I am currently doing my PhD programme in Early Childhood Education (ECE) at the College of Education in the University of Canterbury. For my doctoral research project, I am investigating various aspects of father/male caregivers' participation in early childhood education services. I am particularly interested in gaining an insight of the relationship between father/male caregivers and early childhood teachers; and how it can be improved to the benefit of ECE.

Contact Details

If you have any questions or concerns about this study you can contact me, or my supervisor. I have provided you our contact details as below:

Parisa Soleimani Tadi: Email: parisa.soleimanitadi@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Professor John Everatt: Email: john.everatt@canterbury.ac.nz

Confidentiality and Agreement to Participate

Your confidentiality is guaranteed. You will not be asked to provide your name, address or any identifying information. The information you provide will be stored on a password-protected computer and questionnaires will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. Data will be destroyed after five years. Participation is completely voluntary and you can stop responding at any time, whether you have completed the survey or not. There is no penalty of any kind.

NOTE: The survey should take a short while (about 10-15 minutes) to complete. There are six sections in this survey with each section being marked. If you are willing to help me, please complete the survey and return it to the centre in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction. By ticking below, I agree to participate in this research project based on the understandings above.

☐ **I consent to participate in the survey.**

- I. Your answers to the first section will enable us to build profiles of the fathers/male caregivers who participate in our survey. This information will in no way identify you or your family. You may choose whether or not to answer any or all of these questions.**

1. What is your marital status?

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Never married

2. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ European/Pākehā or New Zealand European
- ☐ New Zealand Māori. Tribal Affiliation (Iwi)
- ☐ European
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Other Asian
- ☐ Other (Please specify) _____

3. What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ High school
- ☐ High school diploma
- ☐ College certificate/Vocational training
- ☐ University degree

4. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 20
- ☐ Between 20-30
- ☐ Between 31-40
- ☐ Above 40

5. How many hours do you work per week?

- ☐ Less than 20 hours
- ☐ Between 20-30 hours
- ☐ More than 30 hours

6. How many hours does your partner work per week?

- ☐ Less than 20 hours
- ☐ Between 20-30 hours
- ☐ More than 30 hours

7. Who else do you share the responsibility of caring for your child/children with?

- ☐ Partner/Spouse
- ☐ Grandparents
- ☐ Relative

8. How often does your child/children go to their early childhood centre?

- ☐ Between 1-3 days a week
- ☐ Between 4-5 days a week

9. Which New Zealand region do you live in?

- ☐ North region
- ☐ South region

II. How would you describe your participation with your child's/children's early education centre?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I regularly go to the centre.					
I attend the centre only for events.					
I only drop off and pick up my child/children.					
I am given responsibilities for the centre's event.					
I and other fathers organise a group within the centre.					
My picture can be seen in my child's/children's portfolios.					
I am encouraged to go early and play with my child/children.					
I am spoken to teachers during drop off and pick up times.					
I feel comfortable to ask questions about my child/children.					
I am interested in participating in my child/children's education.					

III. What are your own beliefs concerning your participation in your child's/children's early education centre?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Parenting is less of a priority for me than for my child's/children's mother.					
I have the confidence to ask teachers questions about my child/children.					
Fathers are teachers too.					
I am important for my child's/children's education.					
I play a central role in my child's/children's personality development.					
I am interested in participating in my child's/children's education.					
I am more likely to participate in physical activities with my child/children.					
My child/children enjoy spending time with me in the centre.					

1. Think of a typical week. About how many times have you communicated with teachers?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-2 times
- ☐ 3-5 times
- ☐ More than 5 times

2. How satisfied are you with the above situation?

- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied

3. Think of a typical week. About how many individual teachers have you communicated with?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-2 teachers
- ☐ 3-5 teachers
- ☐ More than 5 teachers

4. How satisfied are you with the above situation?

- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied

IV. What are the factors that hinder your participation with your child's/children's early education centre?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers' attitudes to father participation in the centre's programmes.					
Lack of male staff in the early childhood centre.					
It is generally easier for early childhood teachers to communicate with mothers.					
Different choice of words is required when interacting with fathers.					
Teachers lack confidence in fathers' ability to parent.					
Mothers' attitudes towards fathers' parenting skill.					
Mothers care more deeply about their children's education.					
Your time schedules impacts your level of participation.					
Your concern about your own parenting skills.					
You enjoy interacting with school age children more than preschool age children.					
Your relationship with your child's/children's mother affects your participation.					

V. What are the factors that would improve your participation with your child's/children's early education centre?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Having teachers well trained to work with fathers.					
Having more male staff in the centre.					
Offering activities within my comfort zone.					
Planning activities for fathers based on their interests.					
Being aware of cultural differences with different groups of fathers.					
Inviting fathers to the centre.					
Encouraging me to take active roles in centre.					
Asking me to help at the centre.					
Getting into a schedule with me.					
Having an environment in the centre that reflects my interests.					

VI. What are the issues that could enhance your participation in your child's/children's early education centre?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Sending written correspondence to me even if I live apart from my child/children.					
Inviting me to the centre to participate in educational activities.					
Training female teachers and staff to encourage my participation in the centre.					
Collecting information about me.					
Providing flexible programmes for fathers.					
Creating a father-friendly environment for fathers in the centre.					
Holding parent-teacher conferences especially for fathers.					
Advertising special days at convenient times for me to come, share ideas and help the centre.					
Matching up new fathers with me in the centre.					
Conducting a survey of my ideas and interests.					

Is there anything you would like to add about your experience in your child's/children's early education centre?

Thank you for completing the survey. Your answers are greatly appreciated.

If you would like a summary of the research please provide your email address in the box below.

Appendix 8

Recording Observation Sheet

Name (centre): _____

Date and time: _____

Mark the box each time the father/male displays the following interactions during his stay in centre.

<i>Frequency of display</i>																	<i>score</i>
Number of father/males																	
Number of interactions																	
<i>Who talk to whom</i>																	
Female teacher to father/male																	
Male teacher to father/male																	
Other parents to father/male																	
Father/male to female teacher																	
Father/male to male teacher																	
Father/male to other parents																	
<i>Place of interactions</i>																	
Playground																	
Office																	
Learning area																	
Doorway area																	
Other																	
<i>Purpose of interactions, if possible</i>																	
Learning/developmental																	
Behavioural/health issues																	
Administrative																	
Relationship building																	
Daddy book club																	
Other																	

Note

Appendix 9

Father-Child Reading Behaviour Checklist

Parent- Child Reading Behaviour Checklist

Name (Father): _____

Name (Child): _____ Age/Gender: _____

Mark the box each time the parent displays the following behaviours during a shared book interaction. Credit behaviours once per page only.

Behaviour	Example	Frequency per page	Score
Points things out in the pictures (This will mostly relate to nouns)	<i>there's a cat look at the trees look at all the cars</i>		
Expands on what their child has said (Rephrases it in an adult form but does not add new information)	<i>C: big cat P: yes, it is a big cat</i>		
Extends what their child has said (Adds additional information to something the child has said)	<i>C: dog P: it's a hairy dog</i>		
Makes a comment on the picture or story	<i>it looks very cold, he's stuck, he's not very friendly, those are red trains</i>		
Helps child interact with vocabulary items in the picture	<i>show me the, where's the, find the, can you see the, what's that, who's that</i>		
Vocabulary Module Total			
Asks closed or yes/no questions	<i>Can you do that? Is that a/are they...? Has he got a...? What noise does a x make? How many x are there? What colour is the x?</i>		
Asks open-ended questions	<i>Where's he going? What's happening on this page? What animals can</i>		

	<i>you see? What happened? What's he going to do? What can you see?</i>		
Questions Module Total			
Makes reference to features of the book such as title, author, illustrator	<i>that's the name of the story, that's the author</i>		
Makes reference to print versus pictures OR references print verbally or nonverbally (e.g. points to words when they start reading, but does not track)	<i>here are the words, let's look at the picture</i>		
Makes reference to print features (e.g. full stops, exclamation marks, capital letters, environmental print, speech bubbles, embedded text)	<i>May be a non-verbal reference e.g. pointing and reading, but might also include labelling e.g. that's a question mark</i>		
Makes reference to directionality and/or points/tracks to the words as they read	<i>we read this way/we start here OR points to words as they read</i>		
Book/Print Features Module Total			
Grand Total			

Notes

- Do not code tag questions as a question e.g. *"it's colourful, isn't it?"*. Ignore the tag and code the statement accordingly (e.g. this would be a comment on the picture).
- Do not code comments about the tangible book e.g. *"mummy turn the page"*, *"oh no the page is ripped"*.
- Do not code questions/comments/discussion external to the book e.g. *"can you please sit down"*, *"bring the book to mummy"*, *"let me fix your hairtie"*.
- Do not code language that is a direct production of the book text e.g. *"out of the gate and off for a walk went Hairy Maclary"*.
- If a disruption to reading occurred that lasted longer than 30 seconds, stop coding at point when disruption started, and start again when book reading recommences.

Appendix 10

PWPA: Preschool Word and Print Awareness Assessment

Child (First and Last): _____ Date: _____

Gender: __M__F Birthdate: _____

PART 1: PRINT CONCEPT

DIRECTIONS: Present the following tasks in the order depicted below. Use the book *Nine Ducks Nine* (Hayes, 1990). Read the text presented on the page and then administer the task. Each item may be repeated one time. Do not prompt, reinforce, or provide feedback to the child in any way.

SAY: *We're going to read this book together, and I need you to help me read.*

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Front of book | <u>Cover:</u> <i>Show me the front of the book.</i>
1pt: turns book to front or points to front |
| _____ 2. Title of book | <u>Cover:</u> <i>Show me the name of the book.</i>
1pt: points to one or more words in title |
| _____ 3. Role of title | <u>Cover:</u> <i>What do you think it says?</i>
2 pts: says 1 or more words in title or relevant title
1pt: explains role of title ('tells what book's about) |
| _____ 4. Print not pictures | <u>Page 1–2:</u> <i>Where do I begin to read?</i>
2 pts: points to first word, top line
1pt: points to any part of narrative text

CUE: if child does not answer correctly, Put finger on first word in top line and say: <i>I begin to read here</i> |
| _____ 5. Directionality | <u>Page 1–2:</u> <i>Then which way do I read?</i>
2 pts: sweeps left to right
1pt: sweeps top to bottom |
| _____ 6. Contextualized print | <u>Page 3–4:</u> <i>Show me where one of the ducks is talking.</i>
1pt: points to print in pictures |
| _____ 7. Directionality (left/right) | <u>Page 5–6:</u> <i>Do I read this page (point to left page) or this page (point to right page) first?</i>
1pt: points to left page |

_____ 8. Directionality (top/bottom)

Page 7–8: *There’s four lines on this page (point to each). Which one do I read first?*

1pt: points to top line

CUE: if child does not answer correctly, Put finger on first line and Say: *I read this one first.*

_____ 9. Directionality RL(top/bottom)

Page 7–8: *Which one do I read last?*

1pt: points to bottom line

_____ 10. Print function

Page 9–10:

CUE: Point to the words spoken by the ducks in the water, and Say: *Why are there all these words in the water?*

1pt: tells that words are what ducks say or similar (e.g., “because they are talking”)

_____ 11 Letter concept

Page 11–12:

A. Show me just one letter on this page.

1pt: points to one letter

B. Show me the first letter on this page.

1pt: points to first letter

C. Now show me a capital letter.

1pt: points to capital letter

_____ 12. Print function

Page 23–24: *And the fox says “stupid ducks”. Where does it say that?*

2pts: points to fox’s words

1pt: points to other print on page

PRINT CONCEPT SCORE	
Raw Score: Add the numbers in 1-12.	Raw Score:
Percentage Correct: Divided raw score by 12.	Percentage Score:

PART 2: WORDS IN PRINT

DIRECTIONS: Present the following tasks in the order depicted below. Use the book *Spot Bakes a Cake* (Hill, 1994). Read the text presented on the page and then administer the task. Each item may be repeated one time. Do not prompt, reinforce, or provide feedback to the child in any way.

SAY: *We're going to read another book together. Just like before, I need you to help me read.*

_____1.

Page 1-2: *Show me just one word in this page.*

1pt: points to one word on page

CUE: I see some big words on this page and some little words. Some are big and some are little.

_____2.

Page 1-2: *Show me where the little words are on this page.*

1pt: points to one or more little words on page

_____3.

Page 1-2: *Now show me where the big words are on this page.*

1pt: points to one or more big words on page

_____4.

Page 3-4: *Show me the first word on this page.*

1pt: points to first word.

_____5.

Page 3-4: *Show me the second word on this page.*

1pt: points to second word.

_____6.

Page 3-4: *Now show me the very last word on this page.*

1pt: points to first word.

_____7.

Page 5-6: *How many words are on this sign?*

1pt: says "three"

_____8.

Page 9-10: *How many words does the mouse say?*

1pt: says "one"

_____9.

Page 11-12: *[cover up the words on page 12 and track the words on page 11]*

How many words is this?

1pt: says "five"

_____10.

Page 13–14: [cover up the words on page 14 and track the words on page 13]

Show me the longest word on this page.

1pt: points to “decorate”

_____11.

Page 17-18: Show me the space between two words.

1pt: points to space

_____12.

Page 21-22: Pint to the words as I read.

1pt: word by word pointing (all three for credit)

WORDS IN PRINT SCORE

Raw Score: Add the numbers in 1-12.

Raw Score:

Percentage Correct: Divided raw score by 12.

Percentage Score:

PWPA

Performance Summary

PART 1: PRINT CONCEPT

Raw Score:

Percentage Correct:

PART 2: WORDS IN PRINT

Raw Score:

Percentage Score:

Observation: _____
